

A REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN  
INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT ENTITLED "THE  
LABRADOR FLOATER FISHERY IN THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY"

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

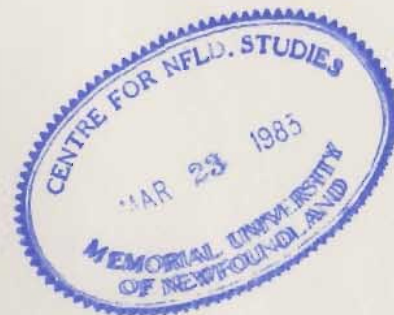
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A report on the Development of  
an Instructional Unit entitled "The Labrador  
Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century"

by



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop a unit of instruction on the Labrador floater fishery. The unit is intended to supplement the existing elementary social studies program in Newfoundland schools. In particular, the materials have been developed as a supplementary to the existing Grade Five history text book, Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief History, by Leslie Harris (1968).

The unit consists of a student booklet whose contents include copies of original documents; a photocopied magazine article; and a guidebook for teachers.

Various stages were involved in the development of the study. An extensive survey was conducted prior to its development. The survey showed that suitable materials do not exist in an instructional format to meet the needs of students and teachers in their study of the Labrador floater fishery. The developer then set about producing instructional materials from primary and secondary sources that would be suitable for use with a Grade Five history class.

When the materials were developed, specialists evaluated them for content, structure, and quality; teachers and students assessed the materials for their teachability and learnability. The recommendations from this formative evaluation led to final revisions and field testing.

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Field testing of the unit was conducted at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City in October and November of 1979. Three teachers and seventy-five students were exposed to the unit for a period of approximately two weeks.

In determining the effectiveness of the instructional unit as a teaching tool, the developer used two types of measuring instruments: a pretest-posttest method for evaluating the achievement level of the students, and student and teacher attitude questionnaires to determine how students and teachers felt about the materials. The results of the pretest-posttest analysis proved to be very favourable; the responses to the questionnaires were also very favourable.

In summary, the materials in the instructional unit have been used and evaluated. The assessment by the participating students and teachers have convinced the developer that the unit can be used very effectively to supplement and update the existing social studies program in Newfoundland elementary schools.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation and successful completion of the present study depended upon the cooperation and good will of many people.

I wish to thank Dr. Garfield Fizzard, my supervisor, for his direction, helpful criticism, and advice during the development and completion of the study.

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Special thanks go to the staff of the Newfoundland provincial Archives for allowing me access to their photo files and newspapers.

Appreciation is expressed to the staff of the Maritime History Group for allowing me permission to photocopy documentary materials relevant to this study.

Special thanks are extended to Captain Earl Winsor for acting as my content evaluator and giving me permission to copy some of his vintage photographs.

My gratitude is extended to the students and teachers of Labrador City who participated in the piloting of this study with such enthusiasm.

Finally, to my wife, Trixie, thank you for understanding, and to Lisa and Chris, thank you for learning to cope with graduate work long before your time.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This report is an account of the development of a unit of instruction dealing with the Labrador floater (schooner) fishery as it was prosecuted by Newfoundland fishermen in the first half of the present century. The unit can be used to supplement and update the existing social studies program in Newfoundland elementary schools and to provide students and teachers with materials on an important aspect of our fisheries. The unit is entitled The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century.

#### Background to the Labrador Floater Fishery

Since the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars the Labrador floater fishery played a major rôle in the Newfoundland economy, involved large capital investments and large scale employment both directly and indirectly, and accounted for more than a quarter of the province's entire production of salt codfish. Nearly every summer, beginning about the first week in June

hundreds of schooners and thousands of men sailed 'down north' for the sheltered harbours and coves of the Labrador coast to trap the 'fish', as cod is called by Newfoundland fishermen. (Black, 1960, p. 267).

By the mid 1950's the migration to Labrador had dropped to just a fraction of what it had been only twenty years previously. It was revived again for a period in the 1960's. Today the fishery is gone.

The floater fishery on the Labrador coast was carried out mainly by fishermen from Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay, and Notre Dame Bay. The Labrador fishermen were divided into two broad classes: the floater fishermen (sometimes referred to as "green fish catchers") and the stationers (sometimes called "squatters" or "roomers"). The floater fishermen lived on board their schooners and moved around to the various fishing grounds, fishing wherever cod could be found. This is the main reason the schooners were called "floaters". The stationers on the other hand established themselves on shore, in some harbour, creek, or bight, and caught and cured their fish in one area. These fishermen, most of them with their families, usually left their home ports in June and returned in September or October. Travel to and from the Labrador coast was either by floater or by coastal boat. The stationers came mainly from St. John's and Conception Bay.

The floaters themselves were heavy ballast, deep draught, sailing schooners usually built of spruce. The most common type weighed between 30 and 70 tons. The schooners prior to 1930 relied almost entirely on sail. However, after that time some of them were equipped with



small gasoline or diesel engines. These engines were used mainly to help them move about through narrow passages and harbours along the coast and to help them move along in calm weather. Most schooner captains used the navigational aids necessary for terrestrial or coastal navigation, for example, magnetic compasses, charts, parallel rules and dividers, although a few depended on their experience and a magnetic compass only while a rare individual understood celestial navigation. Few schooners had radios or electric lights and the crew's living quarters were heated by a wood-burning stove which was also used for cooking.

The most important piece of equipment aboard the floater was the cod trap. Prior to the introduction of the cod trap in the 1880's, trawls, cod seines, and hook and line were used for catching fish.

After the schooners arrived in some harbour or cove on the Labrador coast, cod traps were put into the water where the fish were reported "running". If the fishing proved poor, the schooners moved on to the next cove. At such times they gradually moved northward, occasionally reaching the northernmost point of Labrador - Cape Chidley.

During summers when cod were plentiful, a full "voyage" might be realized in three or four weeks. The schooners then returned to their home ports where the fish were either sold in a wet-salted state, referred to as "salt bulk", or dried and then sold. It was not unusual for schooners to return for a second voyage if the first voyage was successful, and if time permitted. After the final trip, schooners were

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usually anchored for the winter months in some sheltered cove or harbour. Sometimes, however, they engaged in coasting work, especially the shipping of lumber. (Parsons, 1970).

No discussion of the Labrador floater fishery would be complete without making reference to its economic framework - its crew organization, financial procedures, and methods of curing and handling fish.

An aspect of the floater fishery was the "share system". After deductions of cost, the profits were shared among the crew on the basis of the total catch. The fisherman's gross wages, were, therefore, based on the actual number of fish caught. The importance of the share system is emphasized by the fact that the crew were called "sharemen" instead of fishermen. There were variations in the sharing of the catch. However, one of the most common methods was as follows: If a schooner with a crew of ten men, including the captain, brought home eight hundred quintals of fish (a quintal was equal to 112 pounds or 50.8 kilograms), the captain of the schooner received half of the catch, or 400 quintals, and the remaining 400 quintals were divided into 10 equal shares of 40 quintals each, including another share for the captain. When prices were high, this was considered to be a good summer's wages. However, the return in dollars was sometimes quite small. Duncan (1904) says:

A good season's catch is one hundred quintals of dry fish a man .... If his return is \$250 he is in the happiest fortune - richly rewarded beyond his dreams, for his summer's work. One half of that is sufficient to give any modest man a warm glow of content and pride. Often ... the catch is so poor that he must make the best of \$25 or \$30. (p. 865).

The floater fishery involved considerable capital investments. The schooner alone was estimated to absorb about seventy per cent of the total investment. Fishing gear accounted for the balance. For the last fifty years or so of the fishery, schooners were constructed in Newfoundland at a cost of between \$9000 and \$15,000 each. Fishing gear generally cost between \$2700 and \$4500. Added to this were the extremely high production costs - curing, freighting, and warehouse charges. (Black, 1960).

Competition with foreign countries for control of salt fish markets was a major factor in the decline of the Labrador floater fishery. Compared to the superior quality of Icelandic and Norwegian fish, Labrador fish was considered poor quality. There was little control of fish shipments and the fish were frequently stored for long periods of time. Newfoundland merchants were also in the habit of rushing very large catches of fish off to market with the result that there was frequently an oversupply, or "glut", and returns were small. Labrador fishermen prosecuted the fishery in much the same way their ancestors did hundreds of years before. The time-honoured practices, superficially sound, prevented the introduction of more efficient methods of operation. The far superior methods used by European

countries allowed those countries to eventually capture the salt fish markets. After World War I, European competition became very serious; the marketing of Labrador fish was extremely slow. The floater fishery was becoming a highly speculative business. After World War II, Newfoundland fishermen found more continuous employment and higher income in local Newfoundland industries and on Armed Forces Bases. Consequently more and more schooners dropped out of the fishery. In 1954 only five schooners went to Labrador. By 1967 the floater fishery was completely abandoned.

## CHAPTER 2

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

#### Need for Newfoundland Materials

A common topic of discussion among educators today concerns the question of relevancy in education. Most educators agree that the curriculum should be made relevant to the lives of the children and youth for whom the curriculum exists. It is commonly agreed among Newfoundland educators that more attention should be given to the study of Provincial topics in our schools.

In recent years some steps have been taken to upgrade the existing curriculum and develop more extensive local content materials. This is especially noticeable in the areas of Language Arts and Social Studies.

In the area of Language Arts, various aspects of the Newfoundland environment, language, life, folklore, and literature have been developed in schools throughout the province. The rationale for this development has been to aid individual and small group activities and projects which focus attention on language skills, but at the same time develop in the students an awareness in, and knowledge of, Newfoundland.

The English Curriculum Guide (1971) of the Department of Education states that the use of "Newfoundlandia" in the classroom is important.



because it is local. Because a study of many facets of the language can be intellectually challenging and can, by stimulating a student's interest in words and their ways, assist him in expressing his ideas more effectively in speech and writing. (p. 196)

Similar steps have been taken to introduce local materials into the Elementary Social Studies program, especially at the Grade Five level. For several years Geography of Newfoundland by W. Summers and M. Summers (1972) and Newfoundland and Labrador - A Brief History by L. Harris (1968) have been used at the Grade Five level in our schools. Recently The Red Ocre People (a study of how Newfoundland's Beothuck Indians lived) by I. Marshall (1977) was added as a supplement to the Geography and History texts. More recently The Fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador by Sally Lou LeMessurier (1980) was added to the Grade Ten History Programme.

The problem of teaching units of work with Newfoundland content is the shortage of suitable reference and supplementary materials. Consequently, "valuable learning experiences through exposure to the many aspects of Newfoundland, its people, and their culture are missed". (Lane, 1977, p. 3). This problem is particularly noticeable in the area of Social Studies. Not only is there a shortage of supplementary materials, but the essential components needed to design local instructional materials are not readily accessible to many classroom teachers.

Nowhere, in the developer's opinion, is the need for more Newfoundland content in the curriculum greater than in

the area of the Newfoundland fishery. The fishery has played, and still plays, an important role in the lives of many of Newfoundland's people; the Labrador floater fishery was an important part of the total Newfoundland fishing operation.

#### Need for Materials on the Labrador Floater Fishery

Since the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars the Labrador floater fishery played a major role in the Newfoundland economy, involving large scale employment and accounting for more than a quarter of the province's entire production of salt codfish (Black, 1960). However, few textbooks in the existing Newfoundland school curriculum make mention of the operation.

An informal questionnaire was circulated by the developer among ten Social Studies teachers in the Labrador West area. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine if teachers in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador felt that there was a need for more materials on the Labrador floater fishery.

The general consensus gathered from the questionnaire was that teachers should have available to them materials on the Labrador floater fishery. In their opinion, that need was not being met in the present curriculum. While the developer did not draw any conclusions for the rest of the province from this informal survey, the concerns expressed were representative of the concerns of teachers.

throughout the province.

On the basis of the results of this questionnaire and other informal consultations with teachers, the developer decided that this matter was important enough to warrant immediate attention.

#### Alternative solutions

Once the need to obtain materials had been determined, there were three choices of action to follow. They were, in order of preference: (i) borrow or purchase materials already available, (ii) modify existing materials, or (iii) produce materials locally. The developer chose the latter because suitable materials on the Labrador floater fishery do not exist in an instructional format suited to the needs of Grade Five history students.

#### Survey of Available Materials

From personal inquiry and a search of various libraries, reference guides, awareness lists, and public archives, the investigation revealed very little material on the Labrador floater fishery.

Upon examination of the limited printed material found which related to the Labrador floater fishery, few, if any, of the materials were suited for use with Grade Five students. The vocabulary and technical terms used in the books were

generally considered to be above the reading level of a Grade Five class. The books might, however, be of use as background information to teachers interested in teaching a unit of work on the Labrador floater fishery. The published materials, dealing wholly or in part with the Labrador floater fishery, examined by the developer are:

(1) The Labrador Floater Codfishery by W.A. Black (1960). This is an article in the Annals of the American Association of Geographers. In it Black deals with the development of the English Ship Fishery in Newfoundland about the year 1760, the formative years of the Labrador floater fishery, the technical structure of the fishery, the floater fishing equipment, the processing of the fish on shore in Newfoundland, the distribution practices, and the declining years of the fishery. The article is well-written and contains maps, diagrams, tables, and black and white photographs. However, because of the high level vocabulary and technical terms, the article is designed for use by general adult public and/or college students.

(2) Where the Fishers Go - The Story of Labrador, by P.W. Browne (1908). This is not a history book, but, as the author states, "a literary fabric woven from facts and experiences" (p.11). It is an account of the author's leisure visits to the coast of Labrador. The book is fairly well written and very "chatty", and seeks to answer the very fundamental question, "What kind of land is this where the fishers go"? Only one chapter of the book deals with the

fishery and that chapter discusses both the floater fishery and the stationer fishery. Generally, though, the content of the book would not appeal to the interests of Grade Five students.

(3) The Labrador Coast: A Journal of Two Summer Cruises to that Region by A.S. Packard, Jr. (1891). This book is a general account of the Labrador coast, its geography, its people, its animals and plants, and its fishery. While no specific section of the book deals with the fishery, reference is made to the fishing fleet and the "green fish catchers" throughout the book. As an early account of life along the Labrador coast, this book is highly recommended; as a reference book for Grade Five students, it serves no useful purpose.

(4) Along the Labrador Coast by Charles Townsend (1907). This book is a personal account of the author's return journey from St. John's to Nain in northern Labrador. The book is a day-to-day account of the trip, and many parts of it are very interesting. One chapter of the book is devoted to the Labrador floater fishery. The book is well illustrated with faded black and white photographs.

(5) Fifty-Two Years at the Labrador Fishery by Nicholas Smith (1936). This is an interesting story of the life of a Newfoundland fisherman who prosecuted the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery for more than half a century. The author relates the experiences of a long and successful career and



contributes a work of some historical value. The book is simply written and well-illustrated with black and white photographs. Grade Five students would find parts of the book interesting and informative. However, the book is now out of print and existing copies are hard to find.

(6) Labrador: Land of the North by John Parsons (1970). This is a general text on the geography and history of Labrador. A wide range of topics is covered, including people, plant and animal life, mining, and climate. One short chapter deals with the Labrador fishery generally, and only slight reference is made to the Labrador floater fishery.

(7) Down North on the Labrador by W.T. Grenfell (1911). This book is a collection of Labrador stories by the man who succeeded in past years in making isolated Labrador a part of the known world. While confined exclusively to the facts in Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's daily life, the book does make mention of his encounters with the Labrador fishing fleet: "Once again we were on the Labrador coast, guided only by the twinkling lights of schooners putting away their catch after dark" (p. 10).

(8) Labrador: Its discovery, Exploration, and Development by W.S. Gosling (1910). This history of Labrador contains a chapter entitled "The British Fishery on Labrador". Valuable information on the development of the fishery in Labrador is provided, but the text is aimed at adult readers and is highly unsuitable for use with Grade Five students.

(9) A History of Newfoundland: From the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records By D.W. Prowse (1895). A chapter in this book entitled "History of Labrador" deals briefly with the Labrador fishery. Several black and white photographs of Labrador fishing schooners and shore facilities might be of some use to Grade Five students, but generally the text material is unsuitable.

(10) The Seal and Newfoundland Cod Fisheries of Newfoundland by S. Ryan (1978). This slide presentation with written commentary deals with both the Newfoundland seal fishery and the Labrador cod fishery. Nevertheless it is a valuable source of information for students studying the Labrador floater fishery. It is intended for use in Canadian schools as a part of the Canadian Visual History series and can be purchased. It became available after the present project had been completed.

While a search of the Provincial Archives produced very little print material on the Labrador floater fishery, some reference was made to the fishery in the newspapers of the day. The developer was also able to locate numerous black and white photographs on the topic. Some of these materials could be reproduced and made available to students and teachers.

A search of the Maritime History Group Archives of Memorial University also produced some written documents regarding the Labrador floater fishery, for example, applications to export Labrador fish to England and recommendations for a fish processing station on the coast of Labrador.

An investigation into the non-print resources was successful in locating a 16 millimeter film which might be integrated into a unit of work on the Labrador floater fishery. The film, entitled "I can mind the time...", was produced by the Extension Service Media Unit of Memorial University of Newfoundland and is 26 minutes long. In the film, Mr. Levi Davis of Pound Cove, Bonavista Bay reminisces about the time when he was a Labrador fisherman and master of his own schooner.

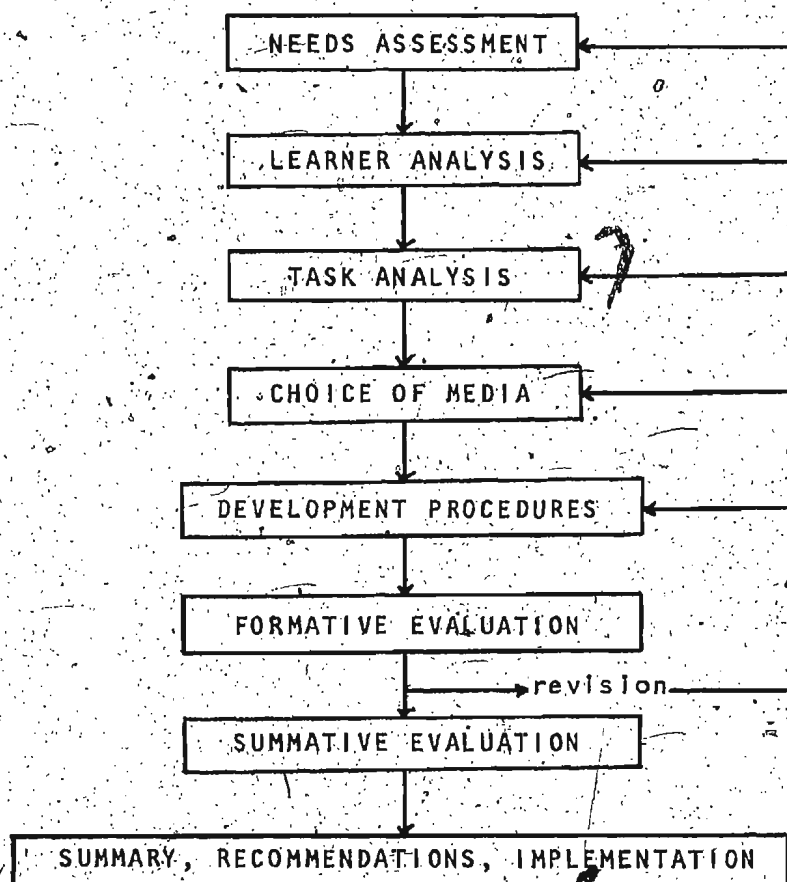
Having ruled out the first two alternatives of either borrowing materials already available or modifying existing materials, the developer decided that the only other alternative was to produce his own materials.

#### Decision to Develop Materials

Based on the fact that suitable materials on the Labrador floater fishery do not exist in an instructional format to meet the needs of Grade Five history students, and the fact that the basic components needed to design and produce such instructional materials are not easily accessible to many classroom teachers in Newfoundland, the developer decided to produce an instructional package from original documents and secondary sources in a format that would be more readily available to teachers and students.

## Outline of Development Process

The following instructional design was chosen and followed in the development of an instructional package on the Labrador floater fishery:



## CHAPTER 3

## LEARNER ANALYSIS

## Introduction

The students for whom this unit of instruction was developed are the Grade Five students in the elementary schools of Newfoundland and Labrador. Any given group of people will possess certain characteristics which make that group unique from all other groups. Such is the case with Grade Five students in the schools of Newfoundland and Labrador. These students possess a wide variety of characteristics of which the following are considered important.

## Age

Grade Five students of Newfoundland and Labrador have an average chronological age of nine and a half years. This information was made available through the Division of Information, Statistics, and Publications of the Department of Education in Newfoundland. The results of such standard tests as the Peabody Test of Vocabulary and the Standard-Binet Test indicated that the majority of these students are average, both physically and mentally, in relation to their chronological age.

### Achievement

With respect to achievement and skills in social studies, the students in Labrador West exhibit a wide range from far below average to far above average, and that most classes in Newfoundland schools would have students over a wide range of ability and that most students in a given class would be considered normal.

There is no Canadian Test of Basic Skills for Grade Five students. However, information obtained from the Division of Instruction of the Department of Education revealed that the results of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills for Grade Six showed that the achievement level of Newfoundland students in that grade is below the national average. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that nationally Grade Five students would be somewhat below average as well. The test results showed that all students range from low achievers to high achievers in the area of social studies.

The instructional unit for which this report was written has a wide range of applicability and was designed for students with a wide range of achievement levels.

### Attitudes

While no statistical data regarding the attitudes of students in the elementary schools of Newfoundland and Labrador were available, consultations with history teachers



at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City have confirmed that most Grade Five students have developed a positive attitude towards the social studies program in that school. The developer regarded this as a positive example of the attitude of Grade Five students throughout the province. This is important considering the fact that the effectiveness of the instructional unit as a teaching tool will be determined partly by the attitudes of the learners. It is assumed that the instructional unit will be used more effectively with students who have a positive attitude toward social studies than with students who have a negative attitude towards social studies.

Attitudes were noted to be even more positive when class interest was focused on a topic relating to the history of Newfoundland.

Naturally, the developer also assumed that the effectiveness of the instructional unit as a teaching tool will be affected by the attitudes of the students towards the method of instruction. Teachers at A.P. Low Elementary found that motivation and interest were strengthened when students were given an opportunity to examine facsimiles of old photographs, newspaper clippings, and documents. The developer concluded that the instructional unit will be more effective with students holding a positive attitude towards this kind of instruction.

## CHAPTER 4

## TASK ANALYSIS

## Tasks and Sub-Tasks

The task analysis helps the developer organize the information which is to be included in the instructional unit. It involves the breaking down of the instructional task into various component sub-tasks. The task analysis chart enables the developer to make certain that all important elements about the topic are included in the instructional unit. The task analysis serves to eliminate any non-essential information from being included in the instructional unit, and at the same time gives the potential user a quick-over-view of the contents of the unit.

The developer has divided the topic of the Labrador floater fishery into sub-tasks as follows:

# TASK ANALYSIS

## THE LABRADOR FLOATER FISHERY - OVERVIEW

BRIEF HISTORY	PREPARATIONS FOR LABRADOR	THE FLOATER AND ITS EQUIPMENT	FISHING GEAR AND TRAP BERTHS	CLEANING THE FISH	CURING THE FISH	SHARING THE FISH	THE ABANDONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First schooners go to Labrador</li> <li>Home ports in Nfld.</li> <li>Places visited in Labrador</li> <li>Peak years</li> <li>Slow decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting fishing gear ready</li> <li>Getting the schooner ready</li> <li>Loading supplies</li> <li>Sailing time</li> <li>Sailing obstacles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The schooner</li> <li>Smaller boats carried</li> <li>Power</li> <li>Navigational aids</li> <li>Main areas of the schooner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cod trap</li> <li>Other fishing gear</li> <li>Trap berths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cutting the fish</li> <li>Washing the fish</li> <li>Storing the fish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unloading fish and selling to merchants</li> <li>Grades of dried fish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makeup of crew</li> <li>Methods of sharing the catch</li> <li>Earnings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Factors that led to the abandonment of the fishery</li> </ul>

## BRIEF HISTORY

1810-1815 - First schooners go to Labrador

Some home ports in Newfoundland

St. John's

The Bays

Conception Bay

Trinity Bay

Bonavista Bay

Notre Dame Bay

Brigus

Port Union

Trinity

Twillingate

Bay Roberts

Catalina

Wesleyville

Herring Neck

Harbour Grace

Greenspond

Little Bay Islands

Some places visited in Labrador

Belle Isle

Hopedale

Cape Charles

Nutak

Battle Harbour

Cape Mugford

Packs Harbour

Saglek

Cape Harrison

Cape Chidley

1894 to 1908 - Peak years

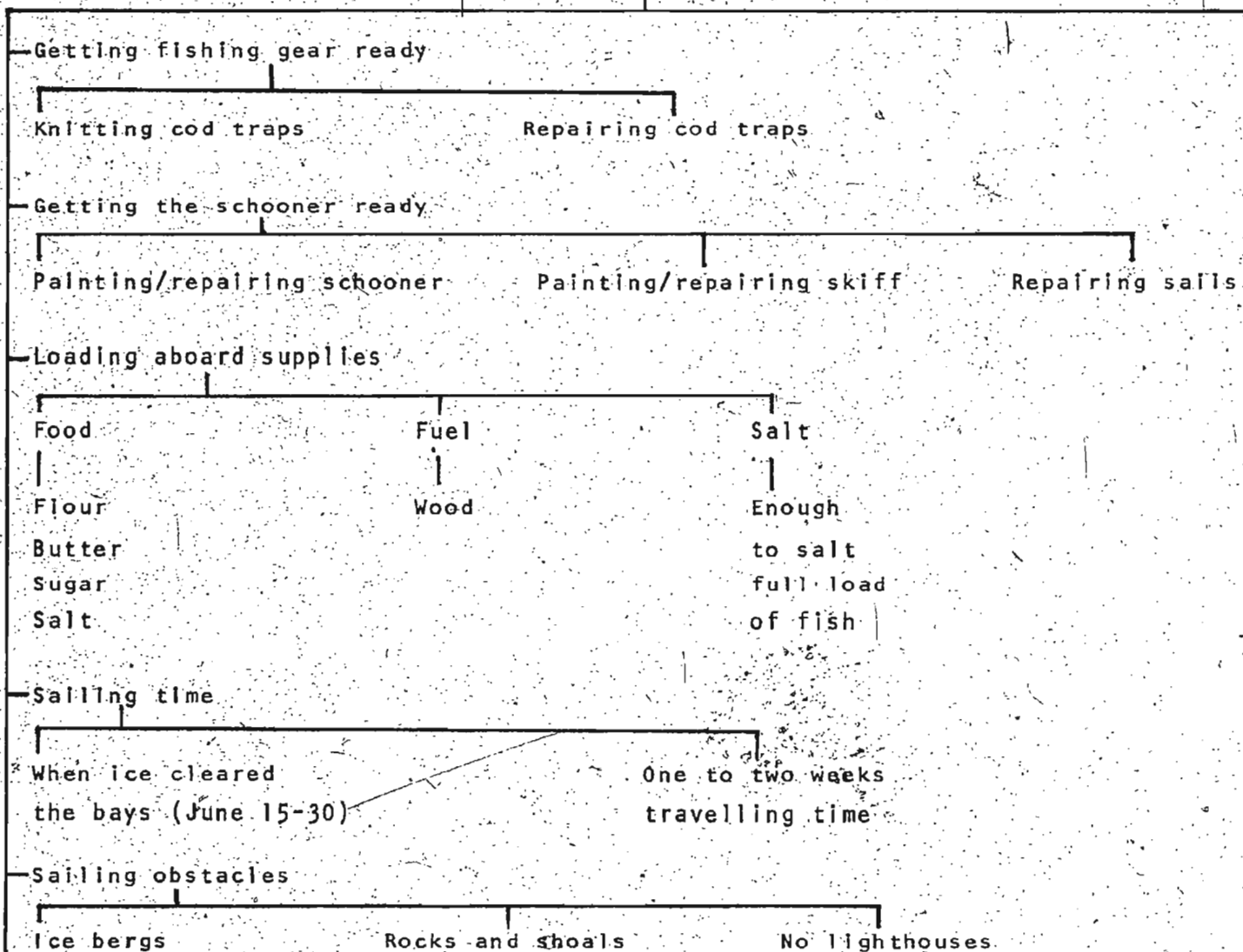
Slow decline

Loss of markets

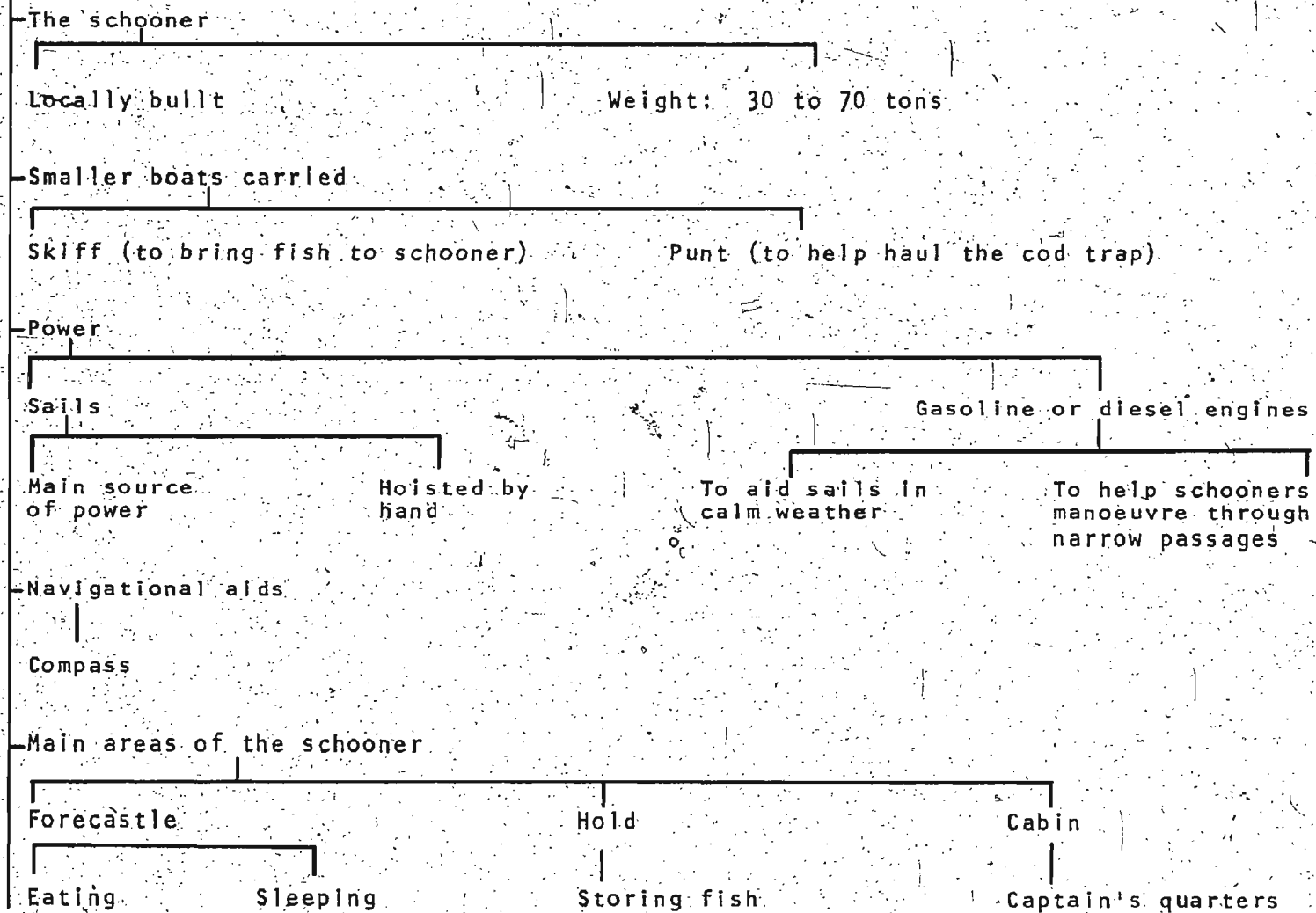
Loss of interest

More staple employment

## PREPARATIONS FOR LABRADOR

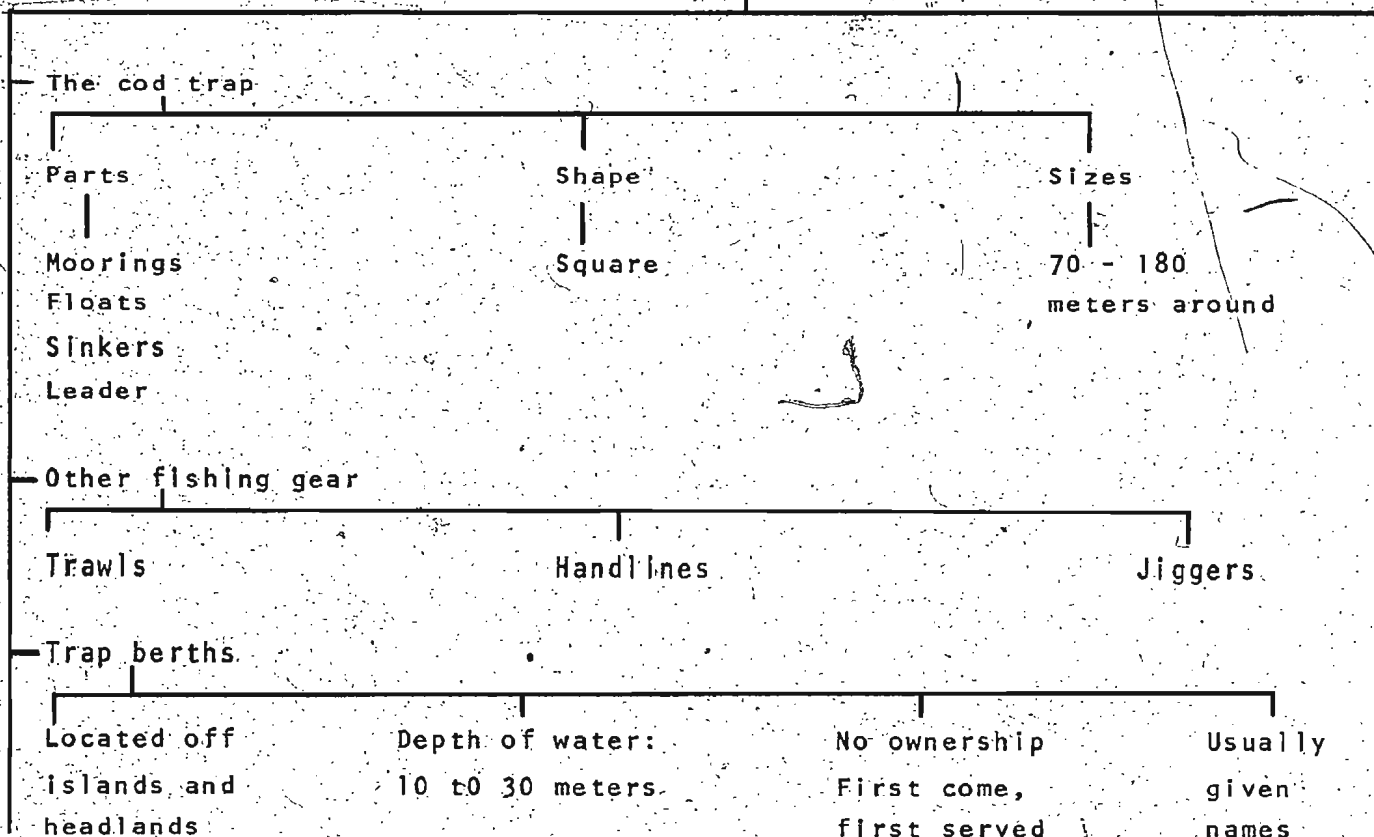


## THE FLOATER AND ITS EQUIPMENT

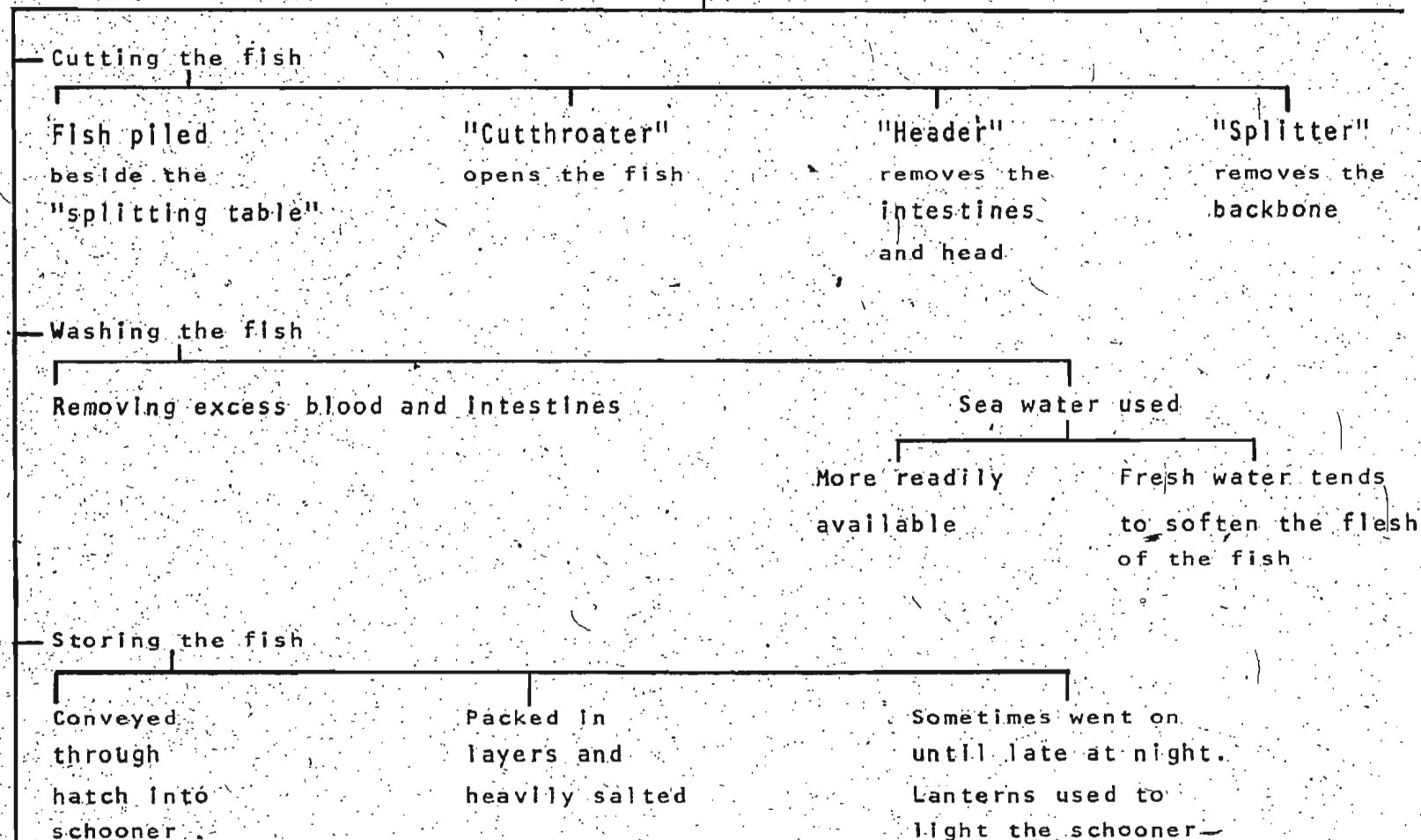




# FISHING GEAR AND TRAP BERTHS



## CLEANING THE FISH



## CURING THE FISH

Fish unloaded from schooner and sold to merchants

Salt bulk

Dried

Washed to  
remove excess  
salt

Spread on  
"flakes" and  
sun-cured

Drying time:  
two days to two  
weeks, depending  
on the amount of  
sunshine

Grades of dried fish

Choice:

Number one

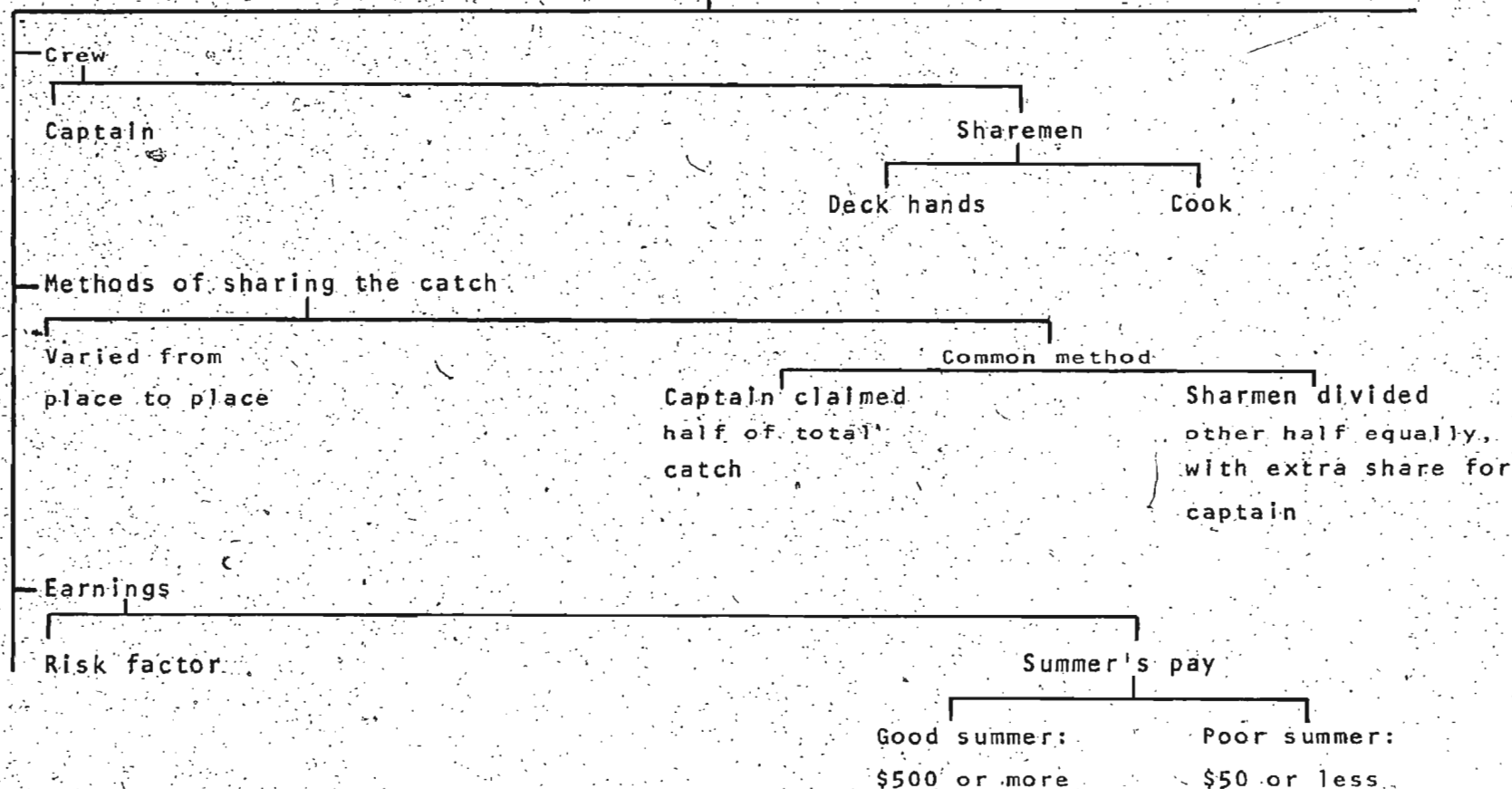
Prime:

Number two

Cullage:

Damaged or  
poorly dried

## SHARING THE FISH



## THE ABANDONMENT

### Factors leading to the abandonment of the fishery

Labrador fish  
generally  
considered  
poor quality

Old fishing  
practices  
changed little  
over the years

Fishermen found  
more continuous  
employment and  
higher income  
elsewhere

### Assumptions and Entry Behaviour

It was assumed that the students had the following knowledge to the level that was necessary for satisfactory performance in studying the unit:

1. Students will have acquired a basic understanding of the importance of the sea in the lives of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. Students will have acquired a basic understanding of the importance of the fishery in the lives of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.
3. Students will be familiar with the concept of sailing schooners.
4. Students will have acquired an understanding of the distinction between the Island of Newfoundland and the Labrador part of the province.



## Behavioral Objectives

In the realm of education, much has been said about the importance of stating behavioral objectives in curriculum development. Thiagarajan, Semmel and Semmel (1974), Mager (1962), Taba (1962), and Bloom (1966) have all explored the topic.

Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel (1974) state that a set of objectives arranged in a suitable sequence becomes the most important component of the instructional package (p. 49).

Bloom (1966) defines educational objective as the explicit formulation of the ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process. That is, the ways in which they will change in their thinking, their feelings, and their actions .... It is important that the major objectives of the school or unit of instruction be clearly identified if time and effort are not to be wasted (p. 26).

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is divided into three categories: (i) the cognitive domain, (ii) the affective domain, and (iii) the psychomotor domain. The cognitive domain includes those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills. This is the domain in which most of the work in curriculum development has taken place and where the clearest definitions of objectives are to be found.

The affective domain includes objectives which describe changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations. Objectives in this domain are not

very precisely stated.

The psychomotor domain is concerned with motor skills and receives major emphasis in Industrial Education, Art, and Physical Education.

For the purpose of the instructional unit The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century, objectives in the cognitive domain were stressed because the developer wishes students to acquire knowledge about the Labrador floater fishery.

According to Bloom (1966), one of the most important categories of the cognitive domain is knowledge. Acquisition of knowledge or information is a primary objective in education today. By knowledge is meant that the student can give evidence that he remembers, by recall or recognition, some of the ideas or phenomena with which he has had experience in the educational process.

The primary objective of the instructional unit was to help students acquire a knowledge and understanding of the Labrador floater fishery as it was carried out by Newfoundland fishermen in the first half of the present century.

#### General Objectives

Having participated in the unit of study, the students should be able to perform the following task:

Be cognizant of and be able to answer questions on the following aspects of the Labrador floater fishery:

- (a) Home ports in Newfoundland
- (b) Fishing locations on the Labrador coast
- (c) Getting ready for the voyage to Labrador
- (d) The floater and its equipment
- (e) Methods of catching fish
- (f) Methods of curing fish
- (g) Methods of sharing fish
- (h) The abandonment of the fishery

#### Specific Objectives

Having studied the booklet The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century the student will, in an examination setting, be able to:

- (i) demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the Labrador floater fishery to the economy of Newfoundland,
- (ii) show an understanding of the meaning of the word "floater",
- (iii) demonstrate an understanding of the work involved in getting the schooner ready for fishing,
- (iv) identify the main species of fish caught by floater fishermen on the coast of Labrador,
- (v) demonstrate a familiarity with home ports in Newfoundland,
- (vi) demonstrate a familiarity with places on the Labrador coast frequented by floater fishermen each summer,

(vii) identify some of the navigational hazards encountered by floater fishermen en route to Labrador in the early summer,

(viii) be familiar with the kinds of navigational aids used by floater fishermen on the coast of Labrador,

(ix) demonstrate an understanding of the use of the auxiliary engines installed in most of the schooners after the year 1930,

(x) identify the kinds of fishing gear used by the floater fishermen,

(xi) demonstrate some knowledge of how a cod trap works,

(xii) show an understanding of the meaning of a "trap berth",

(xiii) show an understanding of the steps followed in cleaning and storing the fish once they were brought to the schooner from the cod trap,

(xiv) relate how the fish were cured and made ready to sell once the schooners reached Newfoundland,

(xv) show some knowledge of the share system as employed by the Labrador floater fishermen,

(xvi) conclude from the contents of the booklet reasons for the abandonment of the Labrador floater fishery.

## CHAPTER 5

## RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF MEDIA

An important question in the development of an instructional unit involves the choice of media to be used in the presentation of the unit. After careful consideration, the developer decided to proceed with the production of an illustrated booklet describing the fishery with printed word and reproductions of original documents and photographs. The documents and many of the photographs were included as appendices. Also included as an appendix was a xerographically reproduced magazine article on the Labrador floater fishery written in 1904.

The developer was of the opinion that such a booklet would be a satisfactory medium to meet the objectives of the unit. The booklet contained factual information about the Labrador floater fishery gleaned from original documents and secondary sources and re-written and re-constructed to meet the reading interests of Grade Five history students. Pictures and drawings were included to enhance the students' understanding of the knowledge presented in the booklet. The booklet served to bring together all essential information about the Labrador floater fishery.

The photographs and documents gave students important experiences in self-directed investigation and reporting. From these articles students gained not only raw information

but also the experience of assessing documentary accuracy.

Hardwick (1964) promotes the use of original source material in the history classroom when he says that

- (i) regular use of original source materials help to make the study of history an incentive process for pupils.
- (ii) frequent use of original source materials encourage pupils to be constructively critical in their thinking.
- (iii) using the document as a source material, the pupil learns to use the same method as the professional historian, and in so doing he learns something of the art and craft of history writing. (pp. 90-91)

Garvey and Krug (1977) state that

the primary source ... tells the story from one angle and not from a consensus of historical opinion. And once the archaic words have been explained, pupils often find it much more congenial both to read and think about a genuine document than a secondary text. (p. 40).

Many Grade Five students have a curiosity to explore documents and artifacts, especially if they are related to local history. The vivid details in an old photograph or the first-hand account of a newspaper article often recaptures the atmosphere of a particular period in the past.

Reading and examining sources about issues in our history help develop students' critical thinking abilities. Newfoundland history takes on new meaning for Grade Five students as they read the following excerpt from the newspaper "The Fishermen's Advocate" (September, 1941):

Reports from the Labrador say that the fishing season is over and most of the fishing fleet have left or is preparing to leave. The season this year



struck an all-time low as far as weather conditions went. Ice, cold hard winds, and driving rain halted operations day after day. Mountainous seas tore up many traps and icy waters made this trip a continuous round of hardships, with, in most cases, poor returns. (p. 14)

The photographs and the facsimiles of letters and newspaper articles were intended to give the students important experiences in self-directed investigation and reporting.

#### Teacher Preferences and Alternatives

While no formal survey of teacher preferences was conducted, as a result of correspondences with Grade Five history teachers, the developer was satisfied that the proposed format of the instructional unit would be attractive. Most teachers interviewed said that they liked the booklet as the medium of presentation, and in view of the historical nature of the study, concluded that the newspaper articles, documents, and old photographs included with the booklet would be helpful in giving students experience in self-directed investigation and would bring them closer to the actual historical setting.

Several teachers said that they would like to see an audio presentation on the topic. The developer agreed that such a presentation on the topic could be of interest and educative. However, he decided against such media in this project as the students needed to scrutinize the documents, newspaper articles, and photographs closely, and this would not be convenient in an audio presentation.

### Practical Considerations

Costs. The production costs of a booklet were lower than those of other media, such as slides, video tape, or motion film. The photographs, letters, and magazine and newspaper articles were copied from archival sources at minimal cost.

Ease of Reproduction. The booklet, including all appendices, is easily copied xerographically. All photographs have been screened for copying through this process.

## CHAPTER 6

## DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES AND FORMATIVE EVALUATION

## Initial Production

The initial production of the instructional unit The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century was completed in the summer of 1979.

The instrumental content for the unit consisted of (i) a student booklet of factual information and documentary materials and (ii) a teacher's manual.

The student booklet presented a brief overview of the entire Labrador floater fishery with enough information presented to give the students a general understanding and appreciation of the operation. All information was taken from original documents and secondary sources and was re-written and re-constructed to meet the reading interests of Grade Five history students. Pictures, maps and diagrams were included to enhance the students' understanding of the knowledge presented. The booklet contained nine chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the fishing operation. Questions and student activities were included at the end of the booklet. Included in the appendices of the booklet were copies of newspaper articles and documents, an entire 12-page magazine article, and a set of black and white photographs.

The newspaper articles, photocopied from the leading newspapers of the day are entitled "Northern Fishing Fleet", "The Labrador Fishery", "Labradormen Less by 110", "Labrador Fish", "Labrador Fishery Report", "Government Guarantees Price of Fish", and "The Departure of Our Labrador Fleet".

The documents, copied from the archives of the Maritime History Group of Memorial University, contain various correspondences between government and the fish merchants regarding such matters as setting up a fish-curing station on the Labrador coast and the supply of salt cod fish from Newfoundland to the armies and navies of England.

The magazine article, entitled "The Fleet on the Labrador", was written by Norman Duncan for Harper's Monthly Magazine in 1904. Duncan, who wrote numerous other articles on Newfoundland and Labrador, writes dramatically and poetically about fishing on the Labrador. The article is an eye-witness account of the floater fishery, full of relevant detail, and written when the fishery was at its peak.

A set of six black and white photographs with brief captions written on them were also included in the unit. These photographs were intended primarily to supplement those in the booklet.

A teacher's manual included in the unit stated the behavioral objectives, outlined the contents of the unit, recommended additional reading material for the teacher, suggested teaching strategies, and contained a key to the questions and activities in the student booklet.

### Evaluation by Content Specialist

The content specialist for the unit was Captain Earl Winsor, a retired Labrador floater captain. The function of the content specialist was to evaluate the contents of the student booklet and to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the booklet. Upon consultation with the content specialist, two points were raised concerning the accuracy of the information. First, the booklet stated that after the year 1900, most of the Labrador floaters were using engines as well as sails for power. The content specialist stated that not many of the floaters had engines installed in them until after the year 1930.

Secondly, the developer failed to mention that it was often necessary for the floaters to take along firewood because firewood was scarce along much of the Labrador coast. The content specialist considered this to be an important point to make.

The recommendations of the content specialist were accepted and the necessary changes were made.

### Evaluation by Learning Specialist

A Grade Five history teacher at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City acted as a learning specialist. The function of the learning specialist was to determine

if the materials contained in the unit were suitable for students at a Grade Five level. After studying the student booklet, the learning specialist approved of its contents and recommended it for use with Grade Five students. However, one point was raised concerning the language of some of the newspaper clippings, documents, and the magazine article. The learning specialist stated that students might have trouble understanding the old-fashioned style of writing. However, since these materials were intended primarily to allow students the opportunity to examine facsimiles of such original documents close up, the developer was of the opinion that it was not essential that the students be able to read the text fluently.

#### Evaluation by Media Specialist

Throughout the development of the instructional unit, as problems arose, the supervisor and staff of the Division of Learning Resources of Memorial University were consulted regarding the technical quality and design of the project. Their suggestions and constructive criticism helped the developer make important decisions regarding the final format for the instructional unit.

### Evaluation by the Learners

Formative evaluation was completed by using the instructional unit with a Grade Five class at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City. All students ranged from average to high achievers in the subject of history. None of these students was to be used in the summative evaluation. The purpose of administering the unit to these learners was to find out what their reactions to the unit would be. After the students had read the booklet the developer held a discussion with them. The discussion centered around questions regarding the content and readability of the booklet and the usefulness of the supplementary materials contained in the appendices of the booklet. All students agreed that the booklet was interesting and easy to understand. They also agreed with few exceptions, that the supplementary materials were very useful in helping them broaden their understanding of the Labrador floater fishery.

Following the evaluation by the learners, no changes were considered necessary by the developer.



## CHAPTER 7

## SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The summative evaluation of the instructional unit The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century was conducted with three Grade Five classes at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City. The three classes totalled 75 students. The unit was subjected to five forms of evaluation as follows: (i) overall success in reaching objectives; (ii) item analysis; (iii) comparison of groups with and without instruction; (iv) student questionnaire; and (v) teacher questionnaire.

## Selection of Subjects.

Three classes of 25 students each were selected from among six classes of Grade Five students at A.P. Low Elementary School. These students were rated as normal achievers by their teachers and were judged by them to be suitable for that grade level. While the developer did not draw any conclusions for the rest of the province from this sample of students, these students were considered to be representative of Grade Five students throughout the province.

## Instrumentation

Two sets of instruments were designed to conduct the summative evaluation: pretest-posttest and attitude survey.

### Pretest-posttest:

The pretest-posttest consisted of 25 multiple-choice questions (see Appendix A). Each question consisted of a statement or question with a choice of four possible responses, only one of which was correct. The purpose of the pretest was to determine the amount of knowledge the students already possessed on the Labrador floater fishery. The purpose of the posttest was to determine how much knowledge the students gained from exposure to the instructional unit. The items on the posttest were identical to those on the pretest.

The test items were designed to correspond to the objectives (see pages 33 and 34). Performance on the test items was taken as an indication of the extent to which the objectives were met. The correspondence of the test items to the objectives is shown in Table 1.

### Attitude Survey

Attitude questionnaires were administered to both students and teachers (see Appendix B). The purpose of the student questionnaire was to determine the student reaction to the technical aspects and usefulness of the instructional materials. The purpose of the teacher attitude questionnaire was to determine the teacher's reaction to the technical design and suitability of the instructional materials.

Table 1

## Matching of Behavioural Objectives With Items on Pre/Post-Test

Objectives (See pages 33 and 34 for details)	Test Item(s)
1. Importance of floater fishery	2
2. the "floater" and its equipment	1, 21
3. getting the schooner ready	3
4. species of fish caught	4
5. home ports	5
6. fishing places in Labrador	6
7. navigational hazards	7
8. navigational aids	8
9. auxiliary engines	9
10. kinds of fishing gear	10, 11, 13
11. how a cod trap works	12
12. trap berths	14
13. cleaning the fish	15, 16
14. curing the fish	17, 18, 19, 20
15. sharing the fish	22, 23, 24
16. the abandonment of the fishery	25

## Classroom Testing

Three groups were involved in the classroom testing: an Experimental Group, Control Group I, and Control Group II. The Experimental Group was given a pretest, the instruction, and the posttest; Control Group I was given the pretest, no instruction, and the posttest; Control Group II did not write the pretest, but was given the instruction and the posttest.

This procedure is based on a design of research proposed by Kerlinger (1973) (see Table 2). Kerlinger goes a step beyond the general experimental group-control group design to include a second control group. The purpose of this group is to monitor the possible sensitizing effects of the pretest on the results of the posttest.

Table 2  
Participation of Groups

Group	Pretest	Instruction	Posttest
Experimental	X	X	X
Control I	X		X
Control II		X	X

In the event that the Experimental Group scores significantly higher on the posttest than Control Group I, can the superior showing of the Experimental Group be the result of the instruction only or is it partly the result

of the sensitizing effects of the pretest? If a comparison of the posttest scores of the three groups shows a significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental Group and Control Group I and no significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental Group and Control Group II, then the sensitizing effects of the pretest on the results of the posttest were not of significant consequence.

The pretest was administered to the Experimental Group and Control Group I only; Control Group II was not given the pretest. Upon completion of the pretest by the Experimental Group and Control Group I, the tests were collected and the results tabulated by the teachers. An answer key was provided by the developer for scoring of the pretest and the posttest (see Appendix C).

Instruction was given to two groups: the Experimental Group and Control Group II. The teachers involved with these two groups were provided with the student booklet one week prior to the introduction of the booklet to the classes. The purpose of this was to allow the teachers sufficient time to become familiar with the booklet so that if any questions should arise about any part of the booklet, the developer would have sufficient time to clarify the problem.

Both teachers were given specific instructions which were read to the students before the administration of the booklet (see Appendix D). These instructions were the only comments required to be made by the teachers prior to administering the booklet. These simple instructions ruled out

the possibility that comments made by the teacher in class might affect the responses of the students on the measurement instruments. The developer refrained from active participation in the administration of the booklet during the evaluation in order to determine whether teachers and students could handle the material effectively without help from the developer.

The teachers involved with the Experimental Group and Control Group II taught the booklet for a total of six periods each.

After the information contained in the booklet was presented to the students in the Experimental Group and Control Group II, the posttest was administered. Upon completion, the posttest was collected and the results were tabulated.

To analyze the results obtained by the students on the measurement instruments, the developer used the following indicators of success: overall success in reaching objectives; item analysis; and comparison of groups with and without instruction.

#### Overall success in reaching objectives

The overall success of meeting the objectives as set down by the developer was determined by calculating the percentage of students in the Experimental Group with various percentages of correct items. The developer had arbitrarily set 75 percent as an acceptable success

Indicator. Table 3 shows that 84 percent of the students in the Experimental Group scored 75 percent or more on the posttest.

Table 3  
Overall Success in Reaching Objectives

Percent of Students	Percent of Items Correct
4%	100%
24%	95% or more
32%	90% or more
52%	85% or more
72%	80% or more
84%	75% or more
96%	70% or more
4%	less than 70%

#### Item Analysis

A detailed analysis was conducted on the individual items on the pretest and the posttest of the studies in the Experimental Group. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether each objective was met, and if so, to what extent the presentation of the materials in the instructional unit contributed to that success. An analysis was conducted on each of the 25 test items, based on the number of students who scored correctly on the pretest and the posttest and the percent of correct responses. This



percent gave an indication of the extent to which the objectives were reached by the students. From these figures a success index for each test item was determined.

The success index, expressed as a percentage, is an indicator of the extent to which the developer was successful in reaching his objectives. The index is intended to answer the question: To what extent can the materials in the instructional unit be credited with the success in learning as demonstrated by the scores on the posttest? The developer arbitrarily decided that a success index of 75 percent was the criterion for success. Table 4 indicates that 21 out of 25 test items showed a success index of 75 percent or more.

The formula for the success index is:

$$\frac{b}{b+d} \text{ or } \frac{\text{failure (pretest)} : \text{success (posttest)}}{\text{failure (pretest) : success (posttest) + failure (pretest) : failure (posttest)}}$$

Table 4  
Item Analysis

Question	Pretest	Posttest	$\chi^2$	Correct Responses Posttest	Success Index
1	10	25	6.42*	100%	82%
2	6	19	6.76**	76%	72%
3	3	16	8.89**	64%	66%
4	9	22	5.45*	88%	88%
5	9	22	5.45*	88%	78%
6	6	23	9.96**	92%	88%
7	10	24	5.76*	96%	85%
8	11	24	4.82*	96%	86%
9	10	22	4.50*	88%	80%
10	8	20	5.14*	80%	81%
11	8	23	7.26**	92%	86%
12	7	22	7.75**	88%	77%
13	5	20	9.00**	80%	69%
14	8	24	8.00**	96%	88%
15	6	22	9.14**	88%	83%
16	1	18	15.21***	72%	76%
17	8	24	8.00**	96%	86%
18	2	18	12.80***	72%	76%
19	10	24	5.76*	96%	85%
20	6	20	7.53**	80%	77%
21	2	19	6.76**	76%	79%
22	3	19	11.63***	76%	77%
23	4	20	10.66***	80%	83%
24	7	20	6.23*	80%	70%
25	6	19	6.76**	76%	68%

\* $p < .05$     \*\*  $< .01$     \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Comparison of Groups With and Without Instruction

This measure took the form of an experiment using three separate classes: an Experimental Group and two control groups. The Experimental Group was given a pretest, the instruction, and a posttest; Control Group I was given the pretest, no instruction, and the posttest; Control Group II did not write the pretest, but was given the instruction and the posttest.

The same pretest was given to the Experimental Group and Control Group I. The results were calculated as shown in Table 5. A calculation of the means of the scores indicated that the difference between the means of the two groups was insignificant. It can therefore be concluded that the two groups did not differ in the dimension that is significant to the study and that the two groups were on the same achievement level.

Table 5

Comparison of Pretest Scores for Experimental Group and Control Group I

Group	N	M	SD	t
Experimental Group	25	6.6	2.518	-0.34*
Control Group I	25	6.2	1.508	

\* $p < .05$

N = Number of students in group

M = Mean of pretest scores

SD = Standard deviation

t = A test of the significance

A comparison was also made between the pretest scores and the posttest scores for the Experimental Group and Control Group I. A "t" test was run on the mean of the differences of these scores, with the results shown in Table 6. The results indicate a significant difference between the two means. The developer concluded from that statistic that the Experimental Group learned more than Control Group I.

Table 6.

Comparison of Gain Scores for Experimental Group and Control Group I

Group	N	Md	SD	t
Experimental Group	25	14.56	2.58	19.30*
Control Group I	25	.12	2.505	

\* $p < .05$

Md = Mean of difference between pretest and posttest scores.  
(See Table 4 for explanation of other entries)

Next the developer asked himself the question: Is the superior showing of the Experimental Group the result of the instruction only or is it partly the result of the sensitizing effect of the pretest? To answer this question the developer compared the posttest results of the three groups. The mean posttest scores of the Experimental Group, Control Group I, and Control Group II were calculated. A "t" test was run on the means of the Experimental Group and Control Group I and the means of Control Group I and Control Group II.

The results of these tests are shown in Table 7. The table shows no significant difference between the mean posttest scores of the Experimental Group and Control Group II. Therefore the sensitizing effect of the pretest on the results of the posttest was not of great consequence.

Table 7

Comparison of Posttest Means of Experimental Group and Two Control Groups

Group	N	df	M	SD	t
Experimental Group	25	48	21.16	1.633	27.34*
Control Group I	25		6.88	1.896	
Control Group II	25	48	19.36	2.107	-22.44

\* $p < .001$

df = degrees of frequency  
(See Table 4 for explanation of other entries)

#### Attitude Survey

After the classroom testing was completed, attitude questionnaires were administered to all students and teachers who were exposed to the Instructional unit (see Appendix B). The results of these two questionnaires were tabulated. Table 8 shows the students' responses; Table 9 shows the teachers' responses. (In both cases students and teachers thought favourably about the Instructional unit).

Table 8  
Results of Student Attitude Questionnaire

Questions	Responses			
	1	2	3	4
1. Was the unit too long?	25	20	5	
2. Was the unit well-organized?		3	7	
3. Did you understand the materials taught during the unit of work?		5	8	37
4. Were the materials in the unit appropriate to what was being taught?		5	10	35
5. Did you find the booklet easy to read?		2	5	43
6. Did you enjoy looking at the old photographs?			5	45
7. Did you find the maps and diagrams easy to follow?		1	7	42
8. Did you enjoy examining the newspaper, clippings and documents?		5	6	39
9. Did you enjoy the magazine article, "The Fleet on the Labrador"?		8	10	42
10. As a result of studying this unit, has your knowledge of the Labrador floater fishery improved?		3	10	37
11. Would you like to learn more about the Labrador floater fishery?		5	10	35

Key to responses: 1 very unfavourable    2 unfavourable  
3 favourable    4 very favourable

Table 9

## Results of Teacher Attitude Questionnaire

Questions	Responses			
	1	2	3	4
1. Was the unit interesting for your students?				2
2. Is the reading material suitable for your students?			1	1
3. How much do you feel your students learned from the unit?				2
4. Are the behavioral objectives for the unit appropriate?			1	1
5. How much did you enjoy teaching the unit?				2
6. Do you believe the reading materials are clearly written and understandable?			1	1
7. Is the subject matter well-organized?				2
8. Did the unit adequately cover the topic of the Labrador floater fishery?				2
9. Do you think this instructional unit is an effective teaching aid for Grade Five students?			1	1
10. Would you recommend this unit to other teachers?				2

Key to responses    1 very unfavourable    2 unfavourable  
                              3 favourable                4 very favourable



### Conclusion

The developer concluded from the results of the summative evaluation that the instructional unit was successful. Statistical analysis of the pretest-posttest scores showed that the increase in student knowledge was statistically significant. An analysis of the individual test items showed that most of the behavioral objectives for the unit had been adequately met. In addition, both students' and teachers' attitudes towards the instructional unit were very favourable.

## CHAPTER 8

## SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION

## Summary

The unit The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century was developed in response to current educational thought and research, the need for local content in the school curriculum and the philosophy of the developer.

An extensive survey by the developer showed that suitable materials do not exist in an instructional format to meet the needs of Grade Five students and teachers in their study of the Labrador floater fishery.

Having established a need for instructional materials on the Labrador floater fishery, the developer set about producing an instructional unit from primary and secondary sources that would be suitable for use with a Grade Five social studies class.

A learner analysis was conducted and the behavioral objectives for the unit were selected on the basis of observed needs. The type of media for the instructional unit was selected and a rationale for that choice of media was presented.

Formative evaluation played a major role in the development of the unit. Specialists evaluated the unit for content, structure, and quality; teachers and students

assessed the unit for its teachability and learnability. The recommendations and suggestions from the formative evaluation led to final revisions and summative evaluation.

The unit was field tested in October and November of 1979. Three teachers taught the unit to three separate classes for a total of six class periods each. A total of 75 students were exposed to the unit. The results of this evaluation, under statistical analysis, proved to be very favourable.

Teachers and students reacted overwhelmingly in favour of such units of study on Newfoundland history which they could inject into their present textbook-oriented curriculum.

#### Recommendations

The resulting recommendations deal specifically with the instructional unit The Labrador Floater Fishery In the Twentieth Century. These recommendations are:

1. This unit was field tested in only one school in Newfoundland; it is recommended that it be placed into a large number of schools for a more extensive evaluation.
2. This unit was limited to the development of instructional materials on one area of the Newfoundland fishery: the Labrador floater fishery. It is recommended that, in light of the need for such resource materials, instructional units be developed for other areas of the

Newfoundland fishery.

3. This study was limited to the development of instructional materials on one area of the Labrador fishery: the floater fishery. It is recommended that instructional units be developed for other areas of the Labrador fishery, for example, the "stationer" fishery.

4. This unit was developed to meet the needs of Grade Five history students only. No attempt was made to accommodate students outside this grade and subject area. However, it is the hope of the developer that more projects like this be pursued by others to meet the needs of students above and below this grade level.

#### Implementation

This instructional unit was initially evaluated at A.P. Low Elementary School in Labrador City. Although the unit was designed for use with students at the Grade Five level, teachers at other grade levels have used the unit effectively, including a teacher of Grade Ten social studies at Menihek Integrated High School in Labrador City.

The instructional unit is readily available to teachers at A.P. Low Elementary since the developer is employed as a teacher in the area. It is the wish of the developer to have the unit made available to teachers throughout the province. However, teachers must first be made aware of its existence.

The developer plans to make the unit available for distribution through the Clearinghouse of Memorial University, a system developed by the university to provide information about instructional packages and the packages themselves to teachers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Consideration may also be given to commercial distribution.

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## APPENDIX

APPENDIX A  
Pretest-Posttest

## Pretest-Posttest

Please circle the correct answer

1. Labrador schooners were called  
(a) bankers (b) clippers (c) floaters (d) knockabouts
2. During peak years, how many schooners went to Labrador?  
(a) 200 (b) 500 (c) 1000 (d) more than 1000
3. In early May the schooners were made ready for the summer voyage to Labrador. This operation was called  
(a) going in collar (b) rigging (c) outfitting (d) getting in order
4. The main fish caught by Newfoundland schooners on the Labrador coast was  
(a) salmon (b) cod (c) herring (d) mackerel
5. Which of the following communities was NOT involved with the Labrador floater fishery?  
(a) Bay Roberts (b) Catalina (c) Twillingate (d) Grand Falls
6. Which was the most northerly point reached by fishing schooners in Labrador?  
(a) Cape Harrison (b) Packs Harbour (c) Cape Chidley (d) Hebron
7. The trip to Labrador was often quite dangerous because  
(a) schooner captains sailed their vessels at night and during bad weather  
(b) there were few foghorns or lighthouses to mark the rocks and shoals  
(c) many large ocean liners also used those waters  
(d) the schooner captains were not experienced sailors
8. The main navigational aid used by the Labrador schooner was the  
(a) gyrocompass (b) sextant (c) chronometer (d) magnetic compass
9. In later years many Labrador schooners were equipped with gasoline or diesel engines to  
(a) speed them to the fishing grounds  
(b) help them move more easily through narrow passages and harbours along the coast  
(c) help hoist fish from the skiff into the schooner  
(d) operate the freezing equipment on board

10. The most important piece of fishing gear used by the Labrador schooner was the  
(a) trawl (b) jigger (c) handline (c) cod trap
11. A piece of fishing gear shaped from lead to look like a fish, and with large curved hooks attached to it is called a(an)  
(a) trawl (b) jigger (c) seine (d) handline
12. The part of a cod trap that guides the fish through an opening in the wall of the trap is called the  
(a) leader (b) mooring (c) shore-fast (d) sinker
13. A boat about 10 meters long that was used to transport fish from the cod trap to the schooner was called a(an)  
(a) punt (b) dory (c) bully boat (d) skiff
14. The place where a cod trap was put into the water was called a trap  
(a) ground (b) holding (c) berth (d) area
15. When fish were brought to the schooner for cleaning, they were piled on the deck beside a table called the  
(a) cutting table (b) splitting table (c) filleting table (d) curing table
16. The backbone of a codfish is referred to by fishermen as the  
(a) mainbone (b) tail bone (c) sound bone (d) jig bone
17. The fish were preserved by putting them into the hold of the schooner and  
(a) freezing them (b) salting them (c) canning them (d) smoking them
18. Fish that were sold without first being dried were called  
(a) salt bulk (b) prime cure (c) choice cure (d) cullage
19. Wooden racks covered with boughs and used for drying fish were called  
(a) flakes (b) longers (c) stages (d) dryers
20. Labrador fish were graded according to quality. Fish that were damaged, too small, or improperly dried were given the name  
(a) spoilage (b) seconds (c) leftovers (d) cullage
21. The place on the schooner where the crew ate and slept was called the  
(a) afterdeck (b) cabin (c) forecandle (d) quarterdeck
22. The crew members of the schooner were generally referred to as  
(a) helpers (b) sharemen (c) share holders (d) second hands

23. Methods of sharing the profits from the sale of fish varied from place to place, but the owner of the schooner usually claimed \_\_\_\_ of the total catch  
(a) one quarter (b) one third (c) two thirds (d) one half
24. A quintal is equal to approximately \_\_\_\_ kilograms  
(a) 50 (b) 60 (c) 100 (d) 1000
25. Which of the following is NOT a reason why the Labrador schooner fishery was finally abandoned in the mid 1960's?  
(a) Labrador fish became more and more difficult to sell in foreign markets  
(b) Young men became less and less interested in the Labrador fishery  
(c) Too many schooners were going to Labrador and there were not enough fish for everyone  
(d) Fishermen found jobs elsewhere



APPENDIX B  
Attitude Questionnaires

## Student Attitude Questionnaire

1. Was the unit too long?
2. Was the unit well-organized?
3. Did you understand the materials taught during this unit of work?
4. Were the materials in the unit appropriate to what was being taught?
5. Did you find the booklet easy to read?
6. Did you enjoy looking at the old photographs?
7. Did you find the maps and diagrams easy to follow?
8. Did you enjoy examining the newspaper clippings and documents?
9. Did you enjoy the magazine article, "The Fleet on the Labrador"?
10. As a result of studying this unit, has your knowledge of the Labrador floater fishery improved?
11. Would you like to learn more about the Labrador floater fishery?

## Teacher Attitude Questionnaire

1. Was the unit interesting for your students?
2. Is the reading material in the booklet suitable for your students?
3. How much do you feel your students learned from the unit?
4. Are the objectives for the unit appropriate?
5. How much did you enjoy teaching the unit?
6. Do you believe the reading materials are clearly written and understandable?
7. Is the subject matter well organized?
8. Did the unit adequately cover the topic of the Labrador floater fishery?
9. Do you think this instructional unit is an effective teaching aid for Grade Five students?
10. Would you recommend this unit to other teachers?

## APPENDIX C

Key to Pretest-Posttest



## Answer Key

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d  | 14. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d |
| 2. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d  | 15. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d |
| 3. <input checked="" type="radio"/> a b c d  | 16. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d |
| 4. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d  | 17. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d |
| 5. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d  | 18. <input checked="" type="radio"/> a b c d |
| 6. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d  | 19. <input checked="" type="radio"/> a b c d |
| 7. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d  | 20. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d |
| 8. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d  | 21. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d |
| 9. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d  | 22. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d |
| 10. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d | 23. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d |
| 11. a <input checked="" type="radio"/> b c d | 24. <input checked="" type="radio"/> a b c d |
| 12. <input checked="" type="radio"/> a b c d | 25. a b <input checked="" type="radio"/> c d |
| 13. a b c <input checked="" type="radio"/> d |  |

## APPENDIX D

Instructions for Presentation of Booklet

## Instructions for Presentation of Booklet

### Experimental Group

You are about to begin a study of the Labrador floater fishery. Your study will be rewarding and exciting. What you are about to learn, few other students your age have ever learned.

Before we begin our study, I am going to give you a test to determine how much you already know about the Labrador floater fishery. After that you will each be given a booklet about the Labrador floater fishery which we will all study over the next few days. At the end of that time period you will be given a test to determine how much knowledge you have gained from studying the booklet.

### Control Group II

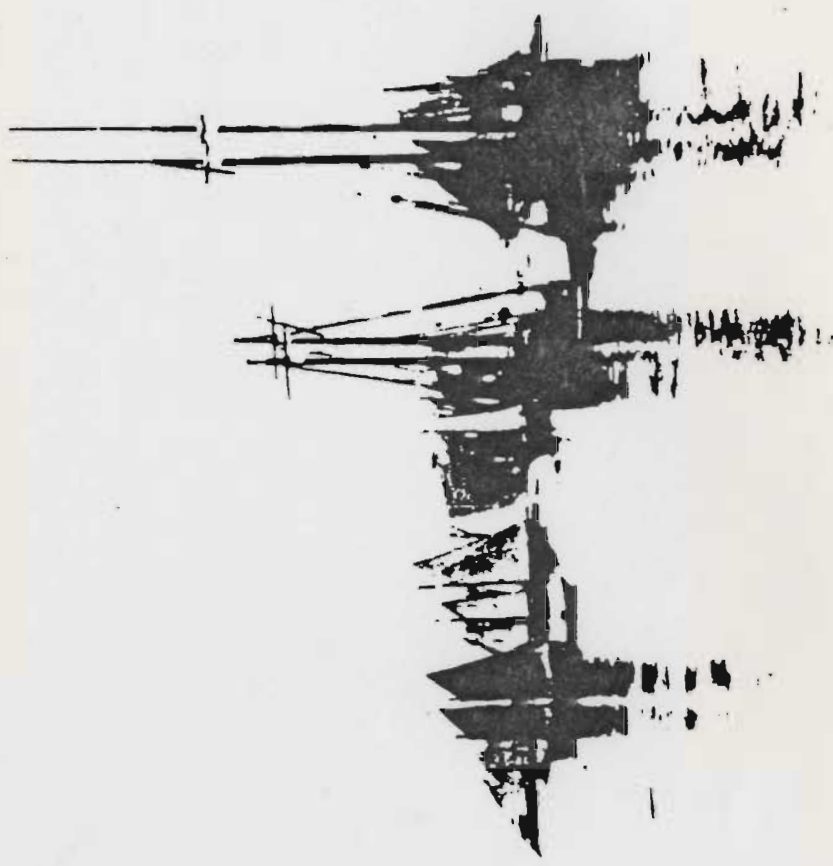
You are about to begin a study of the Labrador floater fishery. Your study will be rewarding and exciting. What you are about to learn, few other students your age have ever learned.

You will each be given a booklet about the Labrador floater fishery which we will all study over the next few days. At the end of that time period you will be given a test to determine how much knowledge you have gained from studying the booklet.



APPENDIX E  
Teacher's Manual

# **THE LABRADOR FLOATER FISHERY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**



**teacher's manual**

## Introduction

The unit of study, The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century, has been designed to help students acquire a knowledge and understanding of the Labrador floater fishery as it was carried out by Newfoundland fishermen in the first half of the present century. The unit has been designed so that the teacher is not required to tell the student everything. The variety of information in the unit invites the student to investigate, predict outcomes, interpret, and evaluate for himself.

The unit has been developed specifically to be used with a Grade Five history class.

It should be possible to teach the unit in five or six lessons; however, this might vary, depending upon the needs of the particular class and teacher.

## Background for the Teacher

Since the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars the Labrador floater fishery played a major role in the Newfoundland economy, involved large capital investments and large scale employment both directly and indirectly, and accounted for more than a quarter of the colony's entire production of salt codfish. (Black, 1960). Nearly every summer, beginning about the first week in June

hundreds of schooners and thousands of men sailed "down north" for the sheltered harbours and coves of the Labrador coast to trap the "fish" as cod was called by Newfoundland fishermen. (Black, 1960, p. 267).

By the mid 1950's the migration to Labrador had dropped to a fraction of what it had been only twenty years previously. It was revived again for a brief period in the

1960's. Today the fishery is gone.

The floater fishery on the Labrador coast was carried out mainly by fishermen from Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay, and Notre Dame Bay. The Labrador fishermen were divided into two broad classes: the floater fishermen (sometimes referred to as "green fish catchers") and the stationers (sometimes referred to as "squatters" or "roomers"). The floater fishermen lived on board their schooners and moved around to the various fishing grounds, fishing wherever cod could be found. This is the main reason the schooners were called "floaters". The stationers, on the other hand, established themselves on shore, in some harbour, creek, or bight, and caught and cured their fish in one area. The stationers came mainly from St. John's and Conception Bay. These fishermen, most of

them with their families, usually left their home ports in June and returned in September or October. Travel to and from the coast of Labrador was by floater or by coastal boat.

The floaters themselves were heavy ballast, deep-draught, sailing schooners, usually built of spruce. The most common type weighed between 30 and 70 tons (a ton is equal to approximately 900 kilograms). Prior to 1930 the schooners relied almost entirely on sails. However, after that time, some of them were equipped with small gasoline or diesel engines. These engines were used mainly to help them move about through narrow passages and harbours along the coast and to help them move along in calm weather. The schooners used simple navigational aids such as the magnetic compass, and sails and anchors were hoisted by hand.

Few schooners had radios or electric lights, and the crew's living quarters were heated by a woodburning stove, which was also used for cooking.

The most important piece of equipment aboard the floater was the cod trap. (Prior to the introduction of the cod trap in 1870, trawls, cod seins, and hook and line were used for catching fish). After the schooners arrived in some harbour or cove on the Labrador coast, cod traps were put into the water where the fish were thought to be "running". If the fishing proved to be poor, the schooners moved on to the next cove. At such times they gradually moved northward, occasionally reaching the northernmost point in Labrador - Cape Chidley.

During summers when cod were plentiful, a full "voyage" might be realized in three or four weeks. The schooners then returned to

their home ports where the fish were either sold in a wet-salted state, referred to as "salt bulk", or dried and then sold. It was not unusual for schooners to return for a second voyage if the first voyage was successful, and if time permitted.

After the final trip, schooners were usually anchored for the winter in some sheltered cove or harbour. Sometimes, however, they engaged in "coasting", especially the shipping of lumber.

No discussion of the Labrador floater fishery would be complete without making reference to its economic framework - its crew organization, financial procedures, and methods of curing and handling fish. The emphasis here is on the fact that the industry was unstable domestically and that it could not survive in the modern, competitive world.

An important aspect of the floater fishery was the "share system". After deductions of cost, the profits were shared among the crew on the basis of the total catch. The fisherman's gross wages were, therefore, based on the actual number of fish caught. The importance of the share system is emphasized by the fact that the crew members were called "sharemen". There were variations in the methods of sharing the catch. However, one of the most common methods was as follows: If a schooner with a crew of ten men, including the captain, brought home eight hundred quintals of fish (a quintal was equal to approximately 50.8 kilograms), the captain of the schooner received half of the catch, or 400 quintals, and the remaining 400 quintals were divided into ten equal shares of 40 quintals each, including another share for the captain. When prices

were high, this was considered to be a good summer's wages. However, the return in dollars was sometimes quite small. Duncan (1904) says:

A good season's catch is one hundred quintals of dry fish a man .... If his return is \$250 he is in the happiest of fortune - richly rewarded beyond his dreams, for his summer's work. One half of that is sufficient to give any modest man a warm glow of content and pride. Often ... the catch is so poor that he must make the best of \$25 or \$30. (p. 865).

The floater fishery involved considerable capital investments. The schooners alone were estimated to absorb about 70 per cent of the total investment. Fishing gear accounted for the balance. For the last 50 years or so of the fishery, schooners were constructed in Newfoundland at a cost of between \$9000 and \$15,000. Fishing gear generally cost between \$2700 and \$4500. Added to this were the extremely high production costs - curing, freighting, and warehousing charges. (Black, 1960).



Competition with foreign countries for control of the salt fish markets was a major factor in the decline of the Labrador floater fishery. Compared to the superior quality of Icelandic and Norwegian fish, Labrador fish was considered low quality. There was little control of fish shipments and the fish were frequently stored for long periods of time. Newfoundland merchants were also in the habit of rushing very large catches of fish off to market with the result that there was frequently an oversupply and returns were small. Labrador fishermen prosecuted the fishery in much the same way their ancestors did hundreds of years before. The time-honoured practices, superficially sound, prevented the introduction of more efficient methods of operation. The far superior methods used by European countries allowed these countries to eventually capture the salt fish markets.

After World War I, European competition became very serious; the marketing of Labrador fish was extremely slow. The floater fishery was becoming a highly speculative business.

After World War II, Newfoundland fishermen found more continuous employment and higher income in local Newfoundland industries. Consequently more and more schooners dropped out of the fishery. In 1954 only five schooners went to Labrador. By 1967 the floater fishery was completely abandoned.

#### Instrumental Content

The instrumental content for the instructional unit The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century consists of an illustrated booklet describing the fishery with printed word and reproductions of original documents,



newspaper clippings, and photographs. The documents, newspaper clippings, and many of the photographs are included as appendices. Also included as an appendix is a xerographically reproduced magazine article on the Labrador floater fishery written in 1904.

The booklet presents a brief overview of the entire Labrador floater fishery, yet there is enough information presented to give the students a general understanding and appreciation of the operation. The booklet is divided into nine chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the fishery. The chapters are:

(1) Introduction: This chapter introduces the topic and distinguishes between floater fishermen and stationers. It stresses the importance of the floater fishery to the Newfoundland economy. (2) The Early Years: This chapter presents a brief history of the Labrador floater

fishery from its beginning in the 1760's to its abandonment in the 1960's. It introduces students to some communities involved in the Labrador floater fishery. It also presents a brief overview of the operation of the fishery. (3) Getting Ready for the Labrador:

This chapter explains what preparations were carried out in making the fishing fleet ready for the summer voyage to the coast of Labrador: cleaning and painting the schooner, repairing the fishing gear, and packing aboard food, fuel, and salt. Students are also introduced to the words "skiff" and "punt".

(4) The Floater and its Equipment: This chapter describes the Labrador schooner and lists the various kinds of equipment and fishing gear on board. It also describes the functions of the skiffs and punts. (5) Trap Berths: In this chapter the students

are introduced to the very important concept of trap berths. Trap berths are defined and trap berth ownership explained. (6) Processing the Fish: This chapter explains what is done with the fish from the time it is taken from the trap until it is salted in the hold of the schooner. Students are introduced to such words as "splitter", "soundbone", and "header". (7) Curing the Fish: This chapter describes what is done with the fish once the schooners have reached their home ports. The differences between "salt bulk" and sun-dried fish is explained. The grading system employed by the merchants is also explained. (8) Sharing the Catch: One of the most common methods of sharing the summer's catch is explained in this chapter. The high risk faced by fishermen and merchants alike is also stressed. (9) The Floaters are Gone: In this con-

cluding chapter, reasons for the abandonment of the Labrador floater fishery are outlined.

Included as appendices in the student booklet are the following materials: a xero-graphically reproduced magazine article, newspaper articles and documents, and a set of six captioned black and white photographs. These materials should be used by the teacher to deepen the students' understanding of the Labrador floater fishery and to interest students in acquiring experience in self-directed investigation and the development of analytical skills.

The magazine article, entitled "The Fleet on the Labrador", was written by Norman Duncan for Harper's Monthly Magazine in 1904. Duncan, who wrote numerous other articles on Newfoundland and Labrador, writes dramatically and poetically about fishing on the Labrador. The

article is an eye-witness account of the floater fishery, full of relevant detail, and written when the fishery was at its peak.

The newspaper articles, photocopied from the leading newspapers of the day are entitled "Northern Fishing Fleet", "The Labrador Fishery", "Labradormen Less by 110", "Labrador Fish", "Labrador Fishery Report", "Government Guarantees Price of Fish", and "The Departure of Our Labrador Fleet".

The documents, copied from the archives of the Maritime History Group of Memorial University, contain various correspondences between government and fish merchants regarding such matters as setting up a fish-curing station on the Labrador coast and the supply of salt cod fish from Newfoundland to the armies and navies of England.

The photographs, with brief captions writ-

ten on them, are intended primarily to supplement those in the main body of the booklet.

All of these articles are an incomparable record of the Labrador floater fishery. They place no arbitrary boundary between the students and the writers and photographers of the past. No re-interpretation is imposed. The students can enjoy the experience of making up their own minds about the evidence and discuss their conclusions with others; the impact is direct.

#### General Objectives

The primary objective of this unit of study is to help students acquire a knowledge and understanding of the Labrador floater fishery as it was carried out by Newfoundland fishermen in the first half of the present century.

Having participated in the unit of study, the students will be able to perform the following task:

Be cognizant of and be able to answer questions on the following aspects of the Labrador floater fishery:

- (a) Home ports in Newfoundland.
- (b) Fishing locations on the Labrador coast.
- (c) Getting ready for the voyage to Labrador.
- (d) The floater and its equipment.
- (e) Methods of catching fish.
- (f) Methods of curing fish.
- (g) Methods of sharing fish.
- (h) The abandonment of the fishery.

#### Specific Objectives

Having studied the booklet, The Labrador Floater Fishery in the Twentieth Century, the

students will, in an examination setting, be able to:

(i) demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the Labrador floater fishery to the economy of Newfoundland,

(ii) show some understanding of the meaning of the word "floater",

(iii) demonstrate an understanding of the work involved in getting the schooner ready for fishing,

(iv) name the main species of fish caught by floater fishermen on the coast of Labrador,

(v) demonstrate a familiarity with home ports in Newfoundland,

(vi) demonstrate a familiarity with places on the Labrador coast frequented by floater fishermen each summer,

(vii) relate what were some of the navi-

gational hazards encountered by floater fishermen en route to Labrador in early summer,

(viii) demonstrate an understanding of the use of the auxiliary engines installed in most of the schooners after the year 1930,

(ix) identify the various kinds of fishing gear used by the floater fishermen,

(x) demonstrate some knowledge of how a cod trap works,

(xi) show an understanding of the meaning of a "trap berth",

(xii) show an understanding of the steps followed in the cleaning and storing of the fish once they were brought to the schooner from the cod trap,

(xiii) relate how the fish were cured and made ready to sell once the schooners reached their home ports,

(xiv) show some knowledge of the share

system as employed by the Labrador floater fishermen,

(xv) conclude from the contents of the booklet reasons for the abandonment of the Labrador floater fishery.

#### Additional Reading Information for the Teacher

Most of the general information on the Labrador floater fishery has been covered in the student booklet. There are, however, a number of books, magazine articles, and government documents available which might prove helpful to any teacher who plans to do an indepth study of the Labrador floater fishery. Some of these are:

(1) The Labrador Floater Codfishery by W.A. Black (1960). This is an article reprinted from the Annals of the American Association of Geog-

raphers. In it Black deals with the development of the English Ship Fishery in Newfoundland about the year 1760, the formative years of the Labrador floater fishery, the technical structure of the fishery, the floater fishing equipment, the processing of the fish on shore in Newfoundland, the distribution of the catch, and the declining years of the fishery.

(2) Where the Fishers Go - The Story of Labrador by P.W. Brown (1901). This is not a history book, but as the author says, "a literary fabric woven from facts and experiences". It is an account of the author's leisure visits to the coast of Labrador. The book is well-written, very "chatty", and seeks to answer the question, "What kind of land is this 'where the fishers go'?"

(3) The Labrador Coast: A Journey of Two Summer Cruises to that Region by A.S. Packard

Jr. (1891). This book is a general account of the Labrador coast, its geography, its people, its animals and plants, and its fishery. While no specific section of the book deals with the fishery, reference is made to the fishing fleets and the "green fish catchers" throughout the book. As an early account of life along the Labrador coast, this book is highly recommended.

(4) Along the Labrador Coast by Charles Townsend (1907). This book is a personal account of the author's return voyage from St. John's, Newfoundland to Nain in northern Labrador. One chapter of this book is devoted to the Labrador floater fishery.

(5) Fifty-Two Years at the Labrador Fishery by Nicholas Smith (1936). This is an interesting story of the life of a Newfoundland fisherman who prosecuted the Newfoundland and

Labrador fishery for more than a half century. The author relates the experiences of a long and successful career and contributes a work of some historical value.

(6) Labrador: Land of the North by John Parsons (1970). This is a general text on the geography and history of Labrador. A wide range of topics are covered, including people, plant and animal life, mining, and climate.

(7) Down North on the Labrador by W.T. Grenfell (1911). This book is a collection of Labrador stories, and although it is confined almost exclusively to the facts in Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's daily life, the book does make mention of his encounters with the Labrador fishing fleet.

(8) Labrador: Its Discovery, Exploration, and Development by W.S. Gosling (1912). This history of Labrador contains a chapter entitled

"The British Fishery on Labrador". Valuable information on the development of the fishery in Labrador is provided, and this chapter would serve as a valuable reference source for the teacher.

(9) A History of Newfoundland: From the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records by D.W. Prowse (1895). A chapter in this book, entitled "History of Labrador" deals briefly with the Labrador fishery. Several black and white photographs of Labrador fishing schooners and shore facilities might be of some use to the students, and the book as a whole is a valuable source of information for the teacher.

(10) The Seal and Labrador Cod Fisheries of Newfoundland by S. Ryan (1978). This is a slide presentation with written commentary which deals with both the Newfoundland seal fishery and the Labrador cod fishery. Nevertheless it contains



valuable information for students studying the Labrador floater fishery. It is intended for use in Canadian schools as a part of the Canadian Visual History series and can be purchased. It became available after the present project had been completed.

#### Suggested Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies for the achievement of the learning objectives for the unit are both expository- and inquiry-oriented. However, because of the different backgrounds of the students to which this unit will be taught, and various other factors, teaching methods will only be suggested, not prescribed. Teachers should plan their own lessons and choose the method of teaching they know will work best in their classrooms.

To aid in the expository strategies, reading materials, pictures, diagrams, and maps are contained in the unit. The inquiry strategies are aided by a number of questions and activities which give students the opportunity to exercise the total range of their thinking skills. All of these questions and activities are contained at the back of the booklet. The solutions to some of the questions are listed at the back of the teacher's manual.

The newspaper clippings, documents, magazine article, and captioned photographs, included in the appendices of the student booklet, may be used by the teacher to interest students in gaining raw information about the Labrador floater fishery. Students may simply be asked to examine the materials, make up their own minds about the content, and discuss their conclusions with other members of the class. Or the teacher may ask

specific questions relative to the contents of the articles. For example, the teacher might ask students to: (i) read the newspaper articles and look for causes for the steady decline in the number of floaters operating on the Labrador coast after the year 1920, (ii) compare the price of salt codfish in 1914 with that in 1946, and (iii) give reasons for the gradual loss of overseas markets.

The magazine article should be read to the class by the teacher simply for the enjoyment of having the students listen to the writer of a long-distant past give a telling and moving appraisal of the Labrador floater fishery as he saw it. Also the archaic words and phrases used throughout the text might need to be explained to the students.

The photographs are intended to be used in conjunction with the written material in

the booklet or with excerpts from the original documents. However, the teacher may wish to assign questions on picture content alone.

Stimulating questions involving facts, impressions, and inferences will require students to examine the pictures thoroughly. For example, students might be asked to examine a particular photograph for clues which tell them that the Labrador floater fishery, unlike our modern-day fishery, was heavily dependent on manual labour.

KEY TO ACTIVITY PROBLEMS

SOMETHING TO DO (I)

COMPASS  
CULLAG  
SPLITTER  
SKIFES  
FORECASTLE  
FLAKES  
STATIONERS  
JUNERS  
BEERS  
AT  
R

SOMETHING TO DO (II)

LIST A

- A. hogshead
- B. choice
- C. quintal
- D. coasting
- E. cod trap
- F. handline
- G. Cape Chidley
- H. splitting table
- I. trawl
- J. salt

LIST B

- G the northernmost point in Labrador
- C 50.8 kilograms of fish
- J used to preserve fish
- E box-shaped net used to catch fish
- I long fishing line with hooks attached
- H where the fish were cleaned
- B a good grade of fish
- D transporting lumber and other freight
- A 90 kilograms of salt
- F single baited hook attached to a long line

SOMETHING TO DO (III)

X	D	F	L	O	A	T	E	R	L	B	X	Y	G	N	O	U	T	P	O	R	T	N	P	U	N	T	
J	S	U	I	S	T	A	T	I	O	N	E	R	B	A	H	O	G	S	H	E	A	D	A	L	E	M	
I	N	I	S	K	I	F	F	X	A	M	P	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	P	L	M	B	A	K	L	O	L
G	P	N	O	R	K	S	I	L	B	T	I	U	L	Y	Z	A	O	P	H	H	G	Y	P	N	O	I	A
G	L	T	R	A	W	L	O	L	I	M	S	L	A	B	C	T	I	L	D	C	A	O	Q	R	N	M	K
E	T	A	P	F	O	R	E	C	A	S	T	L	E	E	C	A	B	I	N	P	Q	R	N	S	T	T	E
R	F	L	L	R	S	M	S	T	I	V	L	A	T	R	O	O	C	T	N	I	G	G	O	P	L	S	S
P	S	Q	S	C	H	O	O	N	E	R	I	G	O	T	O	U	A	T	L	M	M	R	F	G	L	G	O
T	R	X	S	S	O	U	N	D	B	O	N	E	X	S	H	A	R	E	M	E	N	X	Y	M	N	T	A
R	U	S	A	L	T	B	U	L	K	T	X	S	C	B	E	R	A	R	T	I	G	T	B	E	R	T	H

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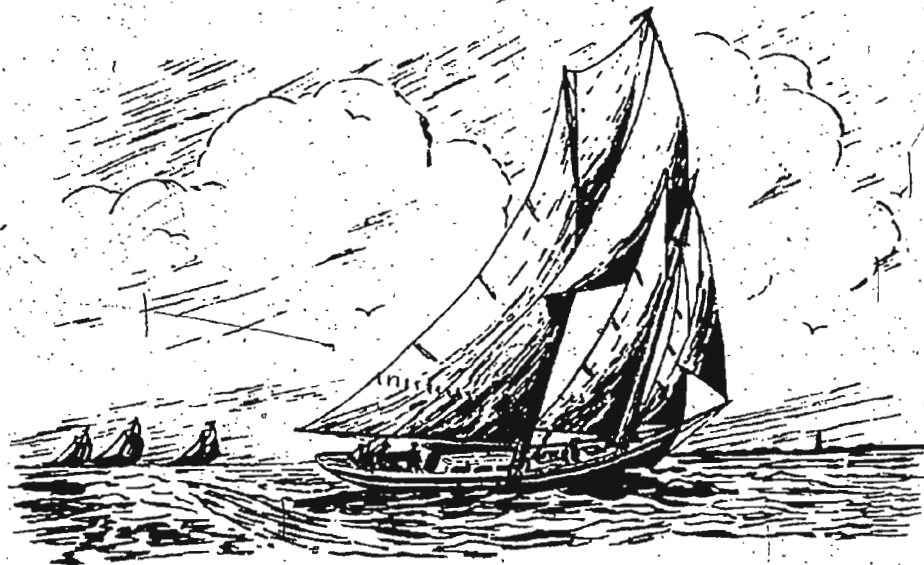


APPENDIX F  
Student Booklet

# **THE LABRADOR FLOATER FISHERY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**



# THE LABRADOR FLOATER FISHERY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

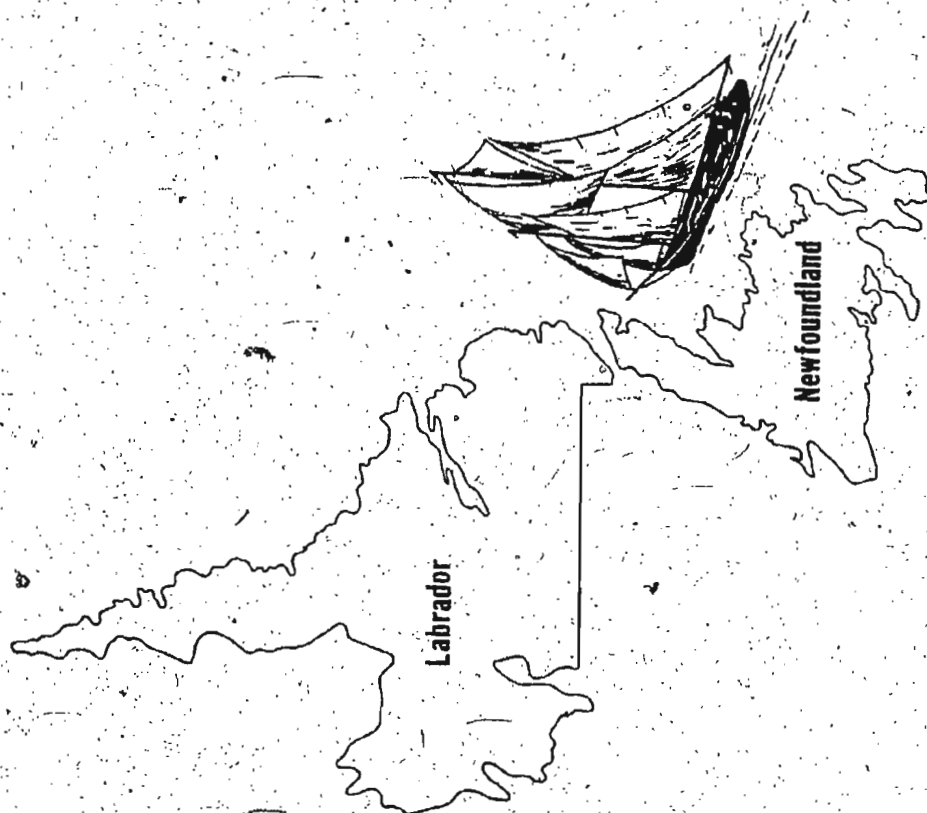


BY

LAWRENCE JENKINS

Memorial University of Newfoundland

St. John's, Newfoundland



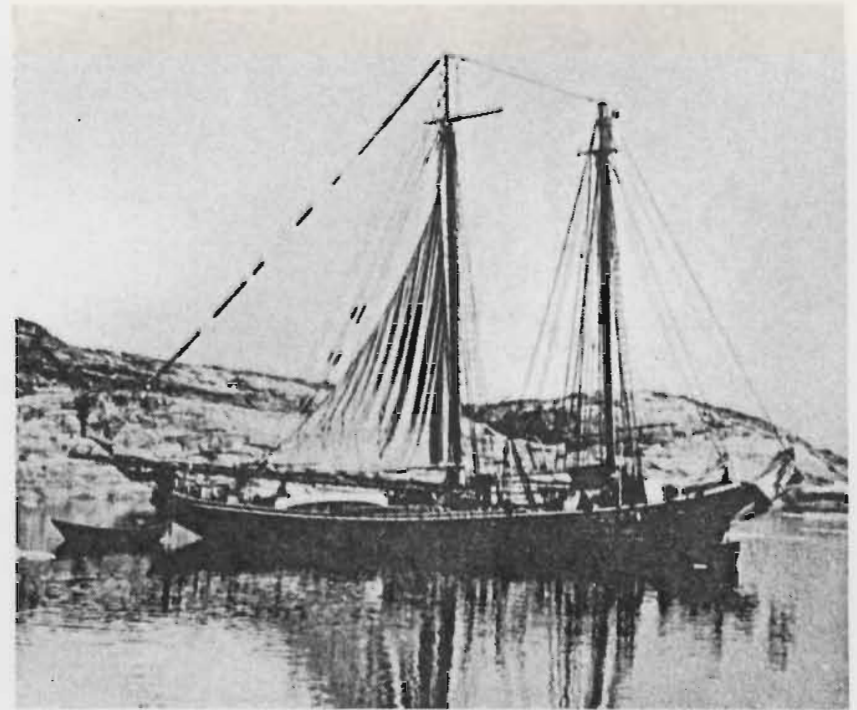
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## Introduction

Not so many years ago almost every Grade Five student in Newfoundland knew the difference between a "floater" fisherman and a "stationer". Because the Labrador fishery was so important to Newfoundland, students were required to study about them in their History and Geography textbooks. The textbooks stated that every year thousands of Newfoundland fishermen set sail for the Labrador coast. Those who stayed on shore and fished were called "stationers" and those who followed the fish, living aboard their schooners, were called "floater" fishermen. The word "floater" was the name given to the schooner.

Now the floaters are gone and most of the stationers too. But for nearly



A Labrador Floater

two hundred years they were an important part of the fishing industry in Newfoundland. In this booklet we are going to learn about the Labrador floater fishery as it was carried out by Newfoundland fishermen in the first half of this century.





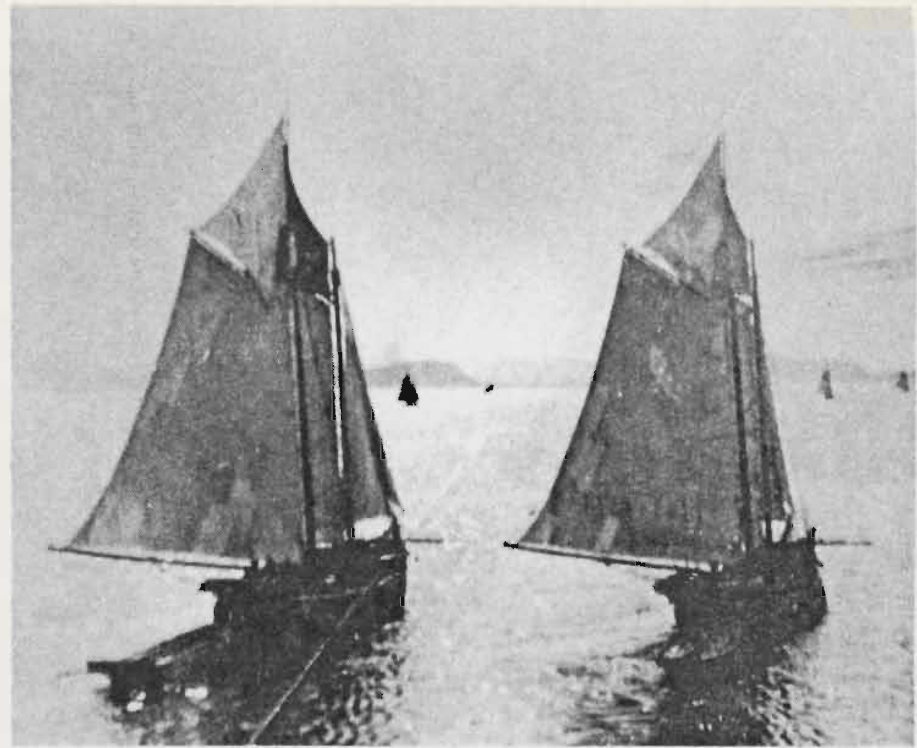
Labrador floaters in St. John's. In the spring, large numbers of outport schooners came to St. John's to outfit for the Labrador fishery



## The Early Years

At the peak of the Labrador floater fishery more than a thousand schooners and nearly ten thousand men went to Labrador to take part in the cod fishery. During those years the floater fishery accounted for more than a quarter of all the cod fish caught in Newfoundland.

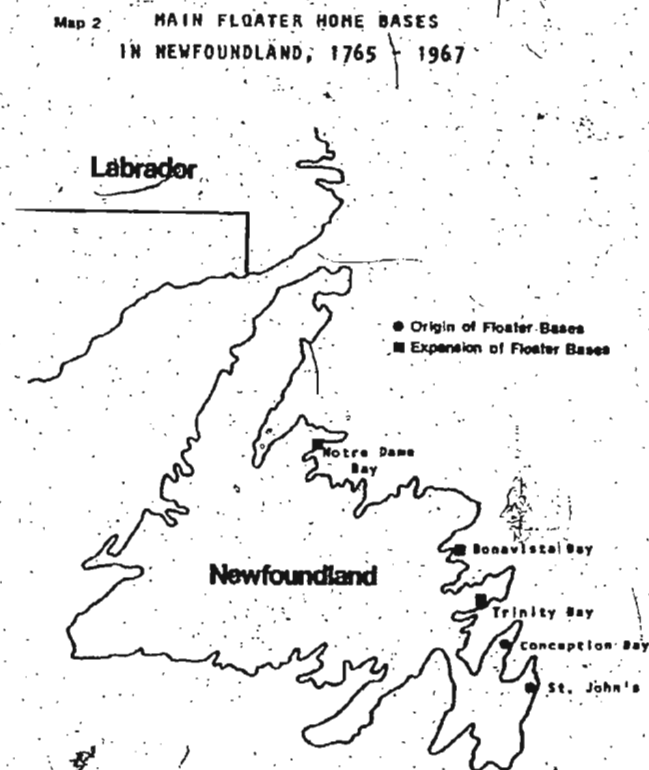
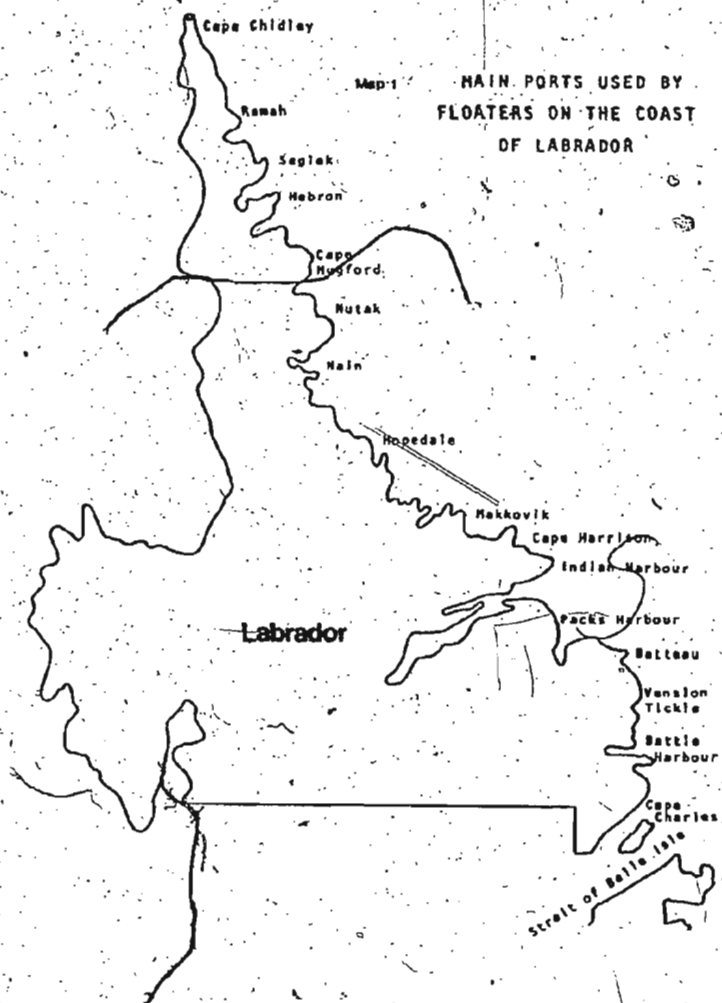
The floater fishery was carried out mainly by fishermen from communities in the northern and eastern bays of Newfoundland. These included Trinity, Catalina, and Port Union in Trinity Bay; Wesleyville, Greenspond, and Bonavista in Bonavista Bay; Fogo, Twillingate, and Little Bay Islands in Notre Dame Bay; and Brigus, Bay Roberts, and Harbour Grace in Conception Bay. (See map number 2). As well, hundreds of other small

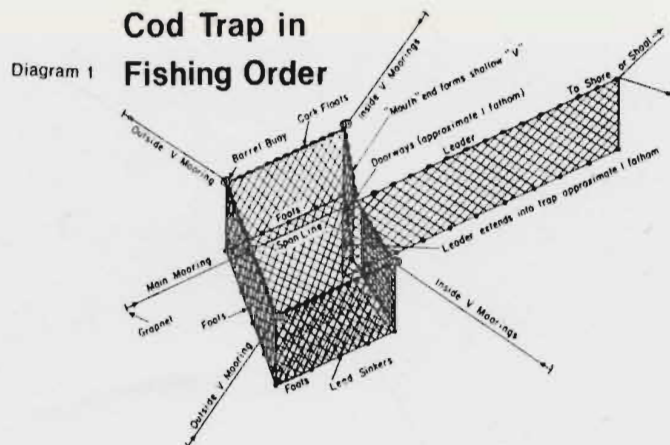


Floaters heading for Labrador

ports along this part of the coast took part in the fishery.

The floater fishermen usually left their home ports sometime in June, fished the Strait of Belle Isle area and coastal waters of Labrador (see map number 1), and





The cod trap was invented more than a hundred years ago by a fisherman at Bonne Esperence, a fishing village in Quebec.

Although all cod traps are the same shape, there are differences in size, ranging from small ones of 70 meters around to giants of 180 meters around. Depths range from 12 to 30 meters.

It takes a great deal of time and money to make a cod trap. Most of it is knitted by hand. Floats, anchors, and lead sinkers have to be made ready, and hundreds of meters of rope have to be cut to size and attached. Most of this work is done during the winter months.

An important part of the cod trap is the leader. The leader is the same depth as the cod trap and extends from the shore into the doorway of the trap. Fish swimming along the shore are guided into the trap where they are still free to move around and are therefore discouraged from leaving again.

In setting the cod trap, the fishermen first place the framework of rope with moorings and floats in place and then attach the net to it. In hauling the trap, the net is pulled up so that the bottom of the trap is slowly brought to the surface, bringing the fish with it. The fish are then taken into the trap "skiffs" with dip nets.

In days gone by, a cod trap was regarded as a very valuable piece of fishing equipment for any fisherman to own. For a trap 120 meters around and 20 meters deep, the following materials would be required: 225 kilograms of twine (line), 15 or 20 large bundles of rope of various sizes, 500 corks, 50 kilograms of lead, 14 anchors, and 8 large floats. Traps in this class cost about \$1600 in 1949.

if successful returned within a month or so with their catch.

It is believed that the first fishing schooners began sailing for Labrador during the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars. For the first few years, the fleet was small. By the 1820's there were 300 schooners fishing on the Labrador coast. By the 1850's the number had increased to 1,000, coming mainly from the northern and eastern bays of Newfoundland and fishing the coast of Labrador from the Strait of Belle Isle to Cape Harrison. (See map number 1).

A great increase in the number of schooners took place between 1894 and 1908. This period is considered to be the peak of the Labrador floater fishery. Thousands of schooners were fishing on the

Labrador coast and bringing home thousands of quintals of cod fish a year. (A quintal in those days was equal to 112 pounds; today it is equal to 100 pounds or about 45 kilograms).

After 1908, however, the floater fleet began to decrease. World War I broke out and Newfoundland merchants found it difficult to find a market for the fish. By 1920 the number of schooners visiting the Labrador was only about half that of 1908. Young fishermen became less and less interested in the Labrador fishery. In 1950 only 65 schooners were reported on the Labrador coast; in 1954 there were only five. This year marked the end of the floater fishery, for even though a few schooners continued to go to Labrador for the next ten years or so, by the year



1967 the floater fishery was gone.

### Getting Ready for the Labrador

Getting ready for the summer voyage to the coast of Labrador usually began about the first week in May. At that time the 6 to 10 men of each schooner "went in collar"; that is, they went to work repairing and outfitting the schooner. In the coves and harbours all along the eastern and northern bays of Newfoundland the great fishing fleet was made ready for the long voyage. It is said that at such times a person could walk across harbours such as Bay Roberts or Harbour Grace by jumping from deck to deck of schooners anchored side by side in the harbours.

Getting the schooner ready for



Getting the schooners ready

sailing usually involved such jobs as cleaning and painting the schooner and other boats, inspecting and repairing cod traps and other fishing gear, repairing sails, and packing aboard food, fuel, and salt.

Only the very basic food was taken. This included such items as flour, salt, butter, sugar, molasses, beans, and peas. It was often necessary to take firewood because firewood was scarce along much of the Labrador coast. The amount of salt taken on board depended on the size of the schooner and the amount of fish expected to be caught. About 250 "hogsheads" of salt was needed for 1000 quintals of fish. One "hogshead" of salt weighed about 90 kilograms.

When at last the ice had cleared from the coast and the winds were right for sailing, the schooners set off for the coast of Labrador. The trip was often quite dangerous. There were few light-houses or fog horns to mark the rocks and shoals, and ice bergs were quite common.

Sudden storms sometimes swept the coast and many schooners were wrecked. But the floater fishermen were skillful sailors and knew the coast quite well. They kept a close watch on weather, and did not often sail their schooners at night.

A week or two later they arrived



A floater captain at the wheel

on the coast of Labrador. The schooners were anchored in some sheltered harbour and cod traps were placed in the water. Smaller boats such as trap "skiffs" and "punts" were used to set and haul the traps. (More will be said about these boats in a later chapter). If the supply of cod ran out before a full load was obtained, the schooners slowly moved farther north. At such times the schooners sometimes reached



On the Labrador coast

the northernmost point in Labrador - Cape Chidley. (see map number 1).

### The Floater and its Equipment

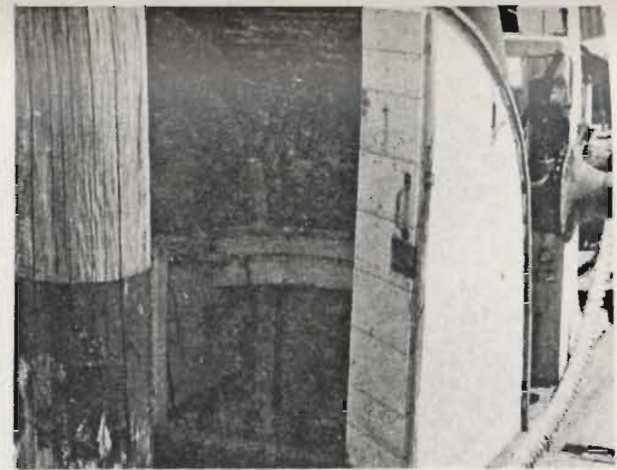
Most of the Labrador schooners were built in the small outports along the northern and eastern bays of Newfoundland. The schooners weighed between 10 and 150 tons, the most common ones being between 30 and 70 tons. (A ton is equal to 2000 pounds or 900 kilograms).

Before 1900 the schooners depended entirely on sails for power. However, by the late 1930's many of them were equipped with small gasoline or diesel engines to help them move about through narrow passages and harbours along the coast, and to help them move faster in calm weather.



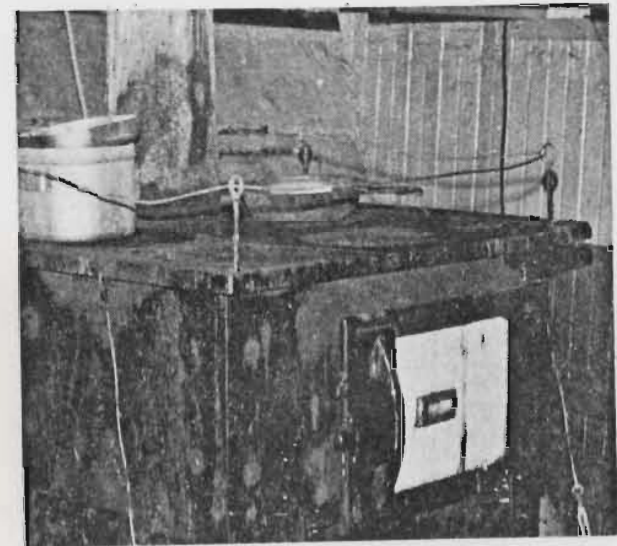


Anchor and chain

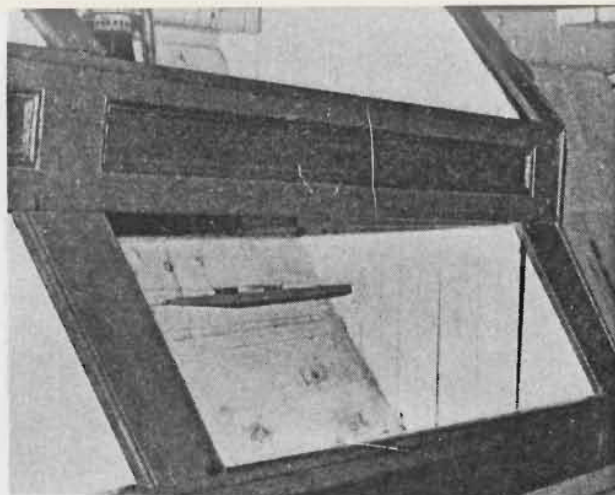


Entrance to fo'c'sle

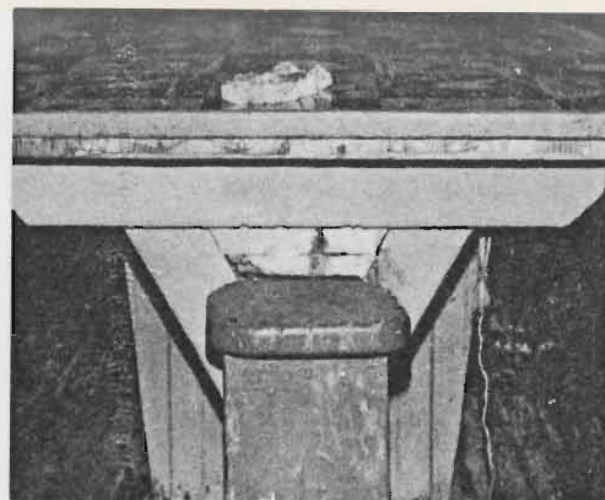
Most floaters used such navigational aids as magnetic compasses and charts. Sails and schooners were hoisted by hand. Few schooners had radios or electric lights, and the crew's living quarters were heated by a wood-burning stove which was also used for cooking. The crew's living quarters was called the forecastle (fo'c'sle) and was in the front of the schooner. The captain usually slept in the cabin which was in the stern of the schooner.



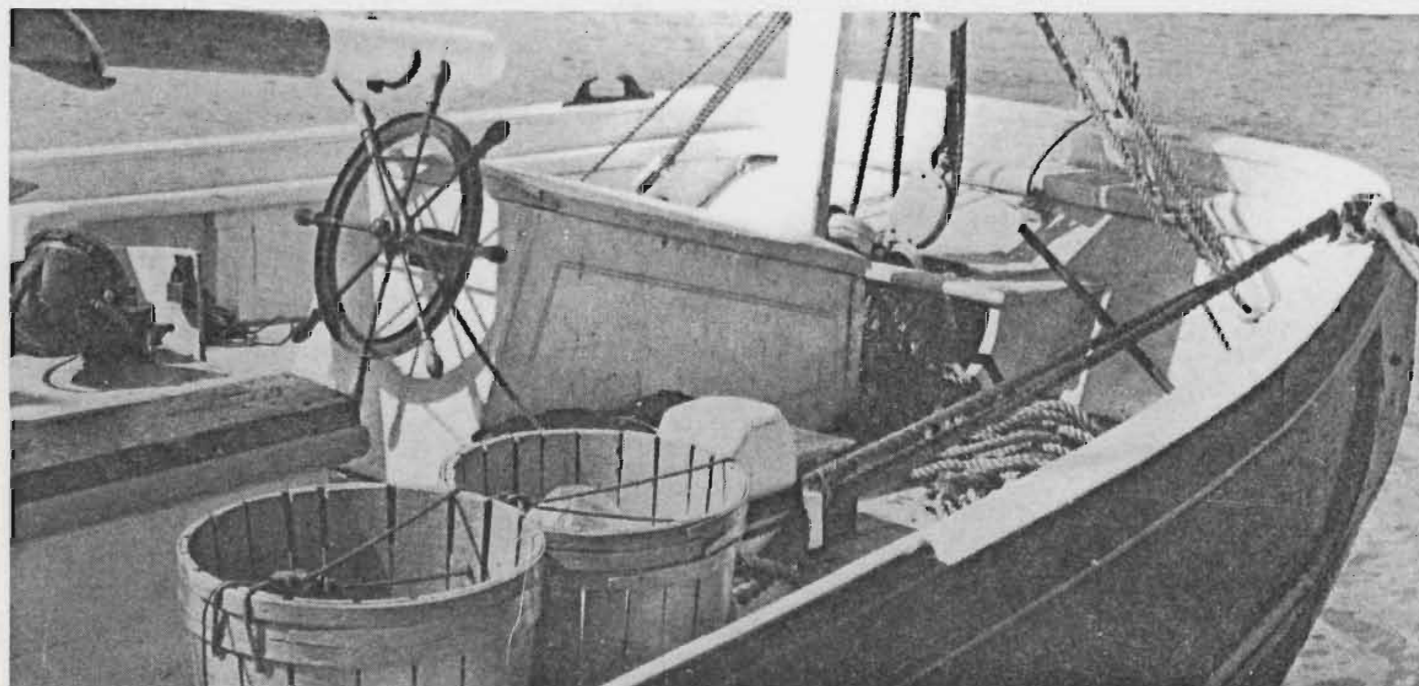
Stove



Bunks

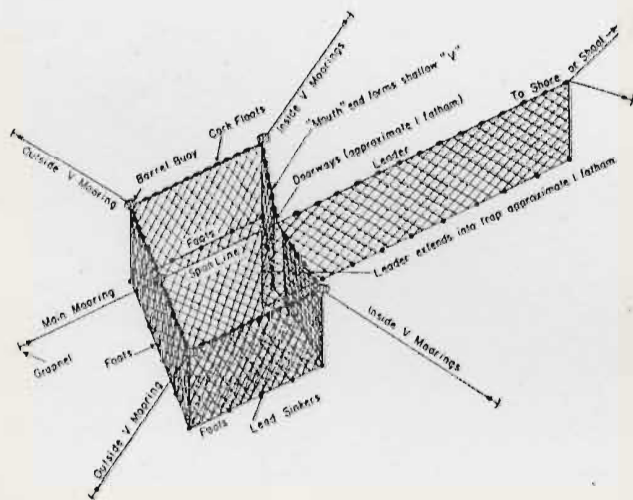


Table

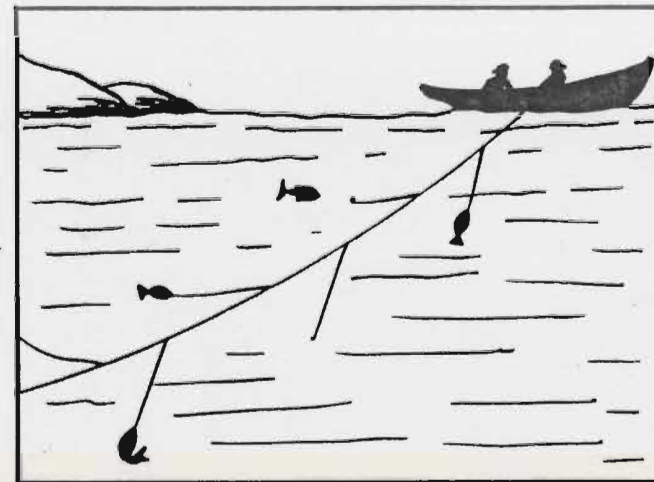


Stern of floater showing steering wheel and entrance to cabin

The most important piece of equipment aboard the floater was the cod trap. (See diagram number 1 for a detailed description of how a cod trap works). During the trapping period, the fishermen sometimes made two or three trips a day to haul the trap. The trapping period usually lasted from two to six weeks and began about the first of July, depending on the location on the coast.



A cod trap in fishing order



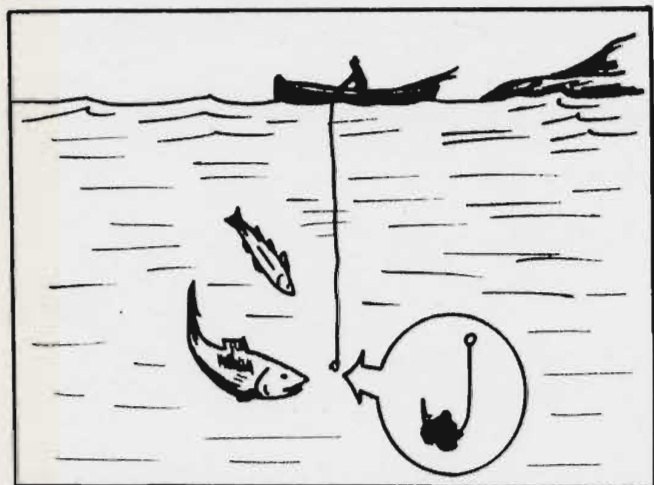
A trawl

During summers when the fish were not easy to catch in a cod trap, the fishermen sometimes used trawls, handlines, and jiggers.

Trawls are made up of a main fishing line a hundred meters or more in length. Shorter lines with hooks on them are attached every meter or so along the main line. Hooks are baited with herring or caplin.

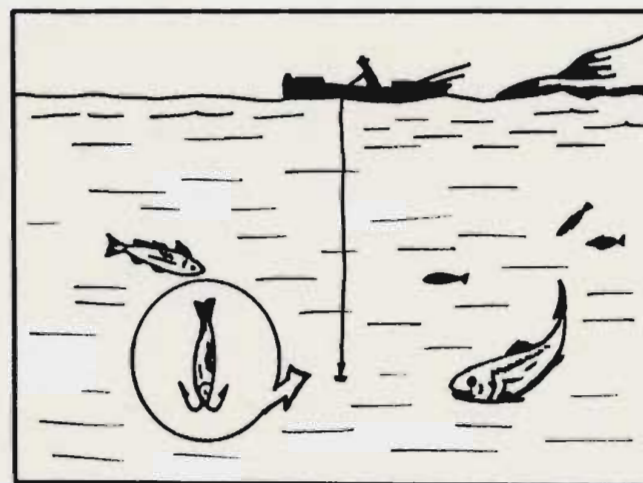


Handlines consist of a single baited hook attached to a long line. Usually one man works two lines, fishing from a small open boat on the fishing ground.



Fishing with a handline

The jigger, made to look like a fish, has two large curved hooks fitted to it and is attached to a long line. The fisherman fishes by jerking his line up and down. This attracts the fish which are hooked in the mouth or side. Bait is not used on the jigger.



Jigging

Every floater carried at least one trap boat or "skiff". This boat was used to take the fish from the cod trap. It was usually about 10 meters long and when loaded could carry 30 to 35 barrels of fish. In the early days they were rowed or sailed to the cod traps; in later days most of them were equipped with gasoline or diesel engines. This kind of boat is still in use in many parts of Newfoundland today.

Every floater also carried one or more small boats called "punts". These were used to help set and haul the cod trap. The "skiff" was towed behind the schooner; the "punts" were usually carried on the deck of the schooner.

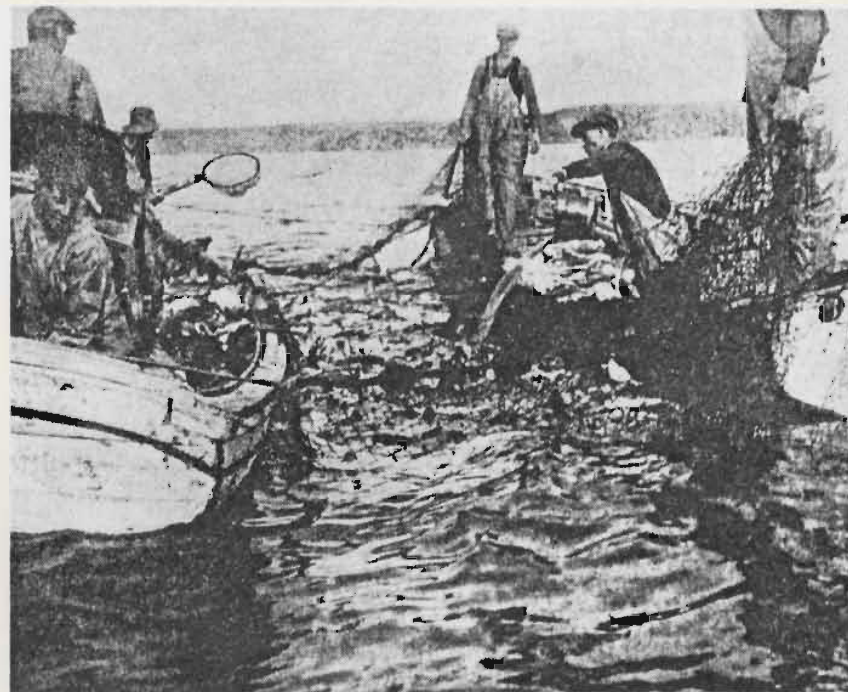
#### Trap Berths

The places where the cod traps were set in the water were called trap berths. The trap berths were located off the islands and headlands of the coast in 10 to 20 fathoms of water. (A fathom is equal to about two meters). One trap was set in each berth.

The Labrador floater fishermen could not claim any particular trap berth as their own. The first to arrive at a

harbour or cove on the coast usually took the best berths. Two to four berths were often used by each floater during the summer.

Trap berths nearly always had names, often very unusual names such as Crack in the Wall, Pot of Gold, and Golden Slipper. Floater fishermen knew the coast



Hauling the cod trap

not so much by names on a map, but by the names of the trap berths.

### Processing the Fish

When the fish were brought to the schooner from the cod traps they were fork-



Cleaning the fish on the deck of  
the schooner

ed onto the deck and piled beside the "splitting table". This was the table where the fish were cleaned. Sometimes there was more than one "splitting table", depending on how much fish was brought in from the cod traps and the number of fishermen working on the schooner.

Three operations took place around the "splitting table": First the cut-throater" cut the fish open; then the "header" removed the head and intestines; finally the "splitter" removed the "sound-bone" or backbone.

The split fish were then washed in large wooden tubs. For this purpose ocean water was used because it was easy to get and because fresh water caused the flesh of the fish to become soft. Next the fish were stored below the deck of

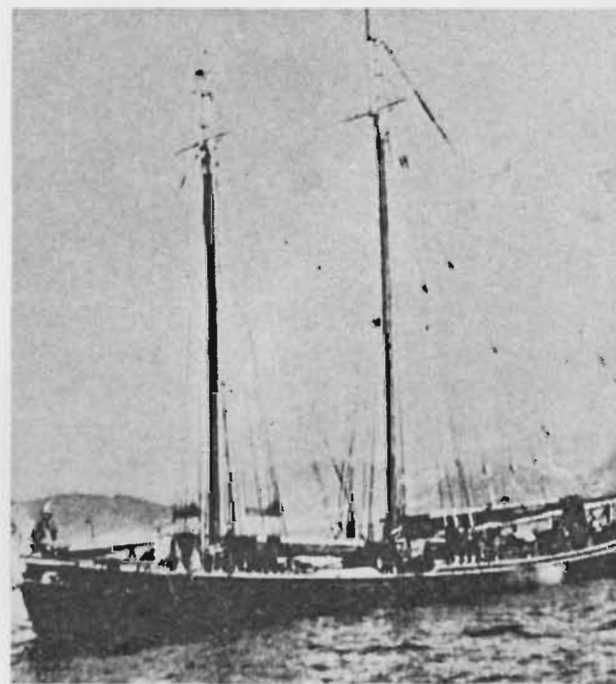


the schooner where they were heavily salted and kept until the schooner returned to its home port in Newfoundland. When fish were plentiful, this operation was repeated several times a day. Often the cleaning and salting of the fish went on until very late at night. Oil lanterns were then used to light the deck of the schooner. During such times the fishermen got only two or three hours of sleep. Then they were called again at daylight to go out to the cod traps. However, because the trapping period was usually short, it was necessary to catch as many fish as possible during this time.

#### Curing the Fish

After enough fish had been caught,

or at the end of the fishing season, the cod traps were taken out of the water, spread out to dry on the rocks ashore, and then stored on board the schooner. A few days later when the weather was fine and the winds were right for sailing, the schooners set sail for their home ports in Newfoundland. They travelled close to the



Loaded and ready for home

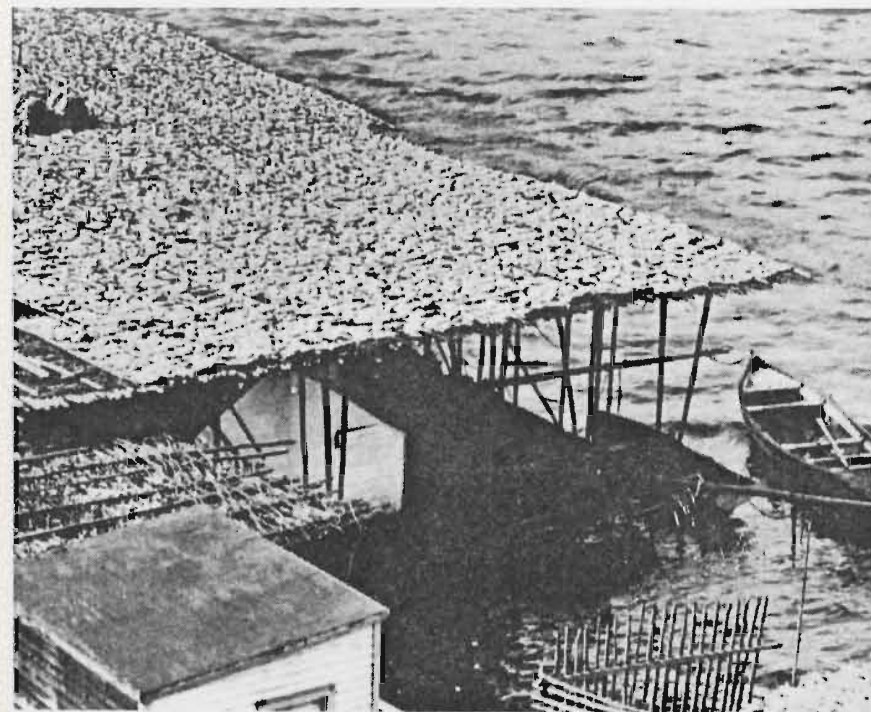


shore and anchored each night in some sheltered harbour. The trip home usually took two or three weeks.

Once the schooners reached their home ports the fish were sold immediately to the fish merchants as "salt bulk" or were sun-dried to be sold at a later date. "Salt bulk" fish was a name given to the fish just as it came from the schooner - salt, soft, and soggy.

To remove the fish from the schooner usually took from a few days to two weeks, depending on the size of the catch.

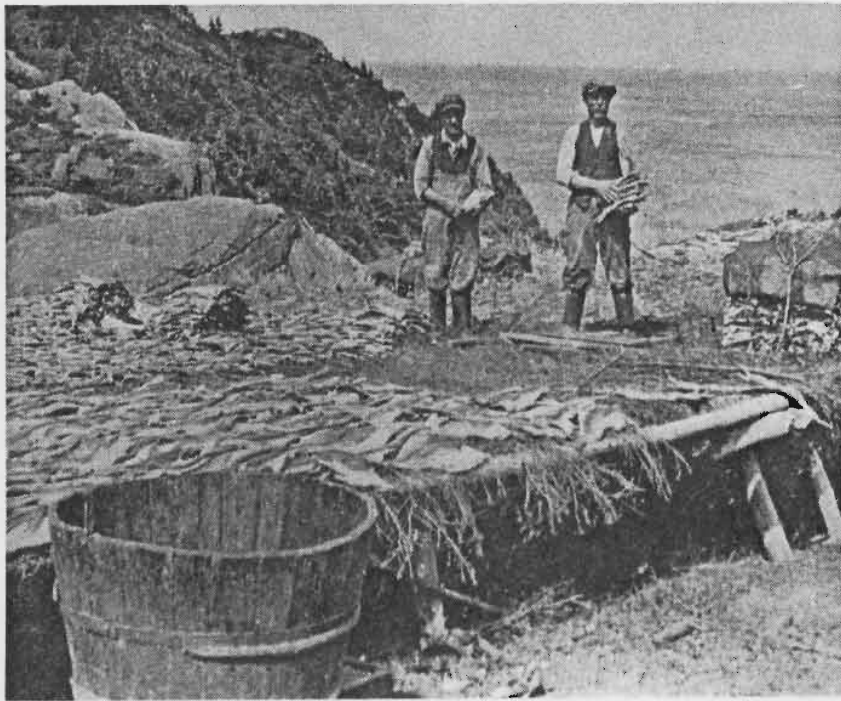
The fish were then washed to remove some of the salt and spread out to be sun-dried on wooden racks covered with evergreen boughs. These racks were called "flakes" and were very useful for drying



Fish spread out to dry on the "flakes" fish because they allowed the air to move freely around and under the fish. Usually two or three days of sunlight were needed to dry the fish. But often, because of fog and bad weather, the fish received only a few hours of good sunlight. This often produced a poor grade of fish. In the autumn, when days were shorter and sunlight

not so strong, two or three weeks were sometimes needed to dry the fish.

To dry the floater's entire load of fish sometimes required the help of not only the crew of the schooner but also the help of their wives and children. Sometimes other people in the community were hired to help in the drying of the fish.



Gathering up the dried fish

After the fish were dried they were either taken to the local merchant and sold or loaded back on board the schooner and taken to St. John's to be sold.

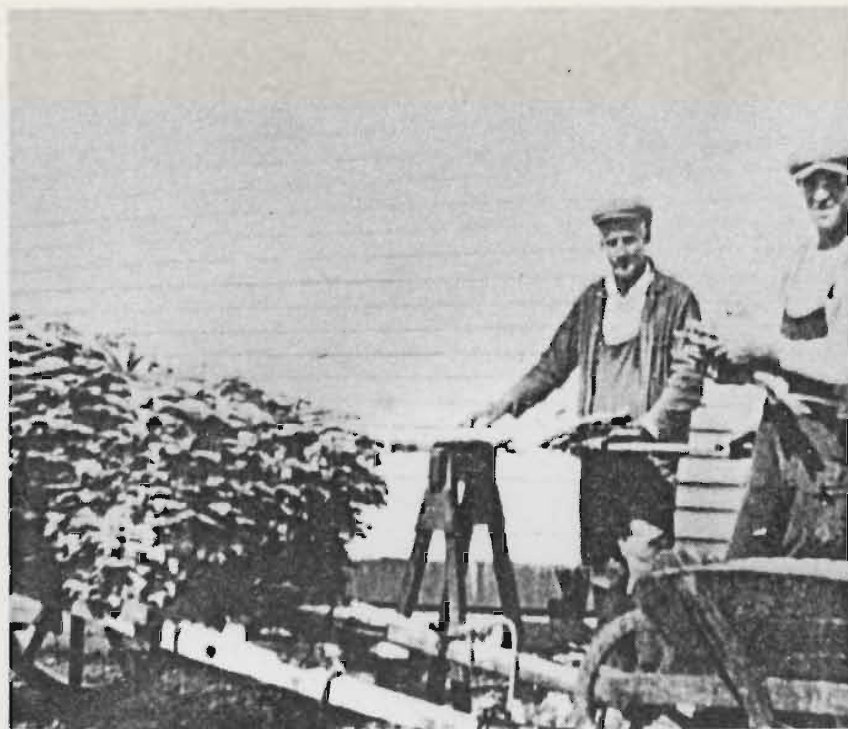


Unloading the dried fish at the merchant's wharf. The man on the right is grading the fish.



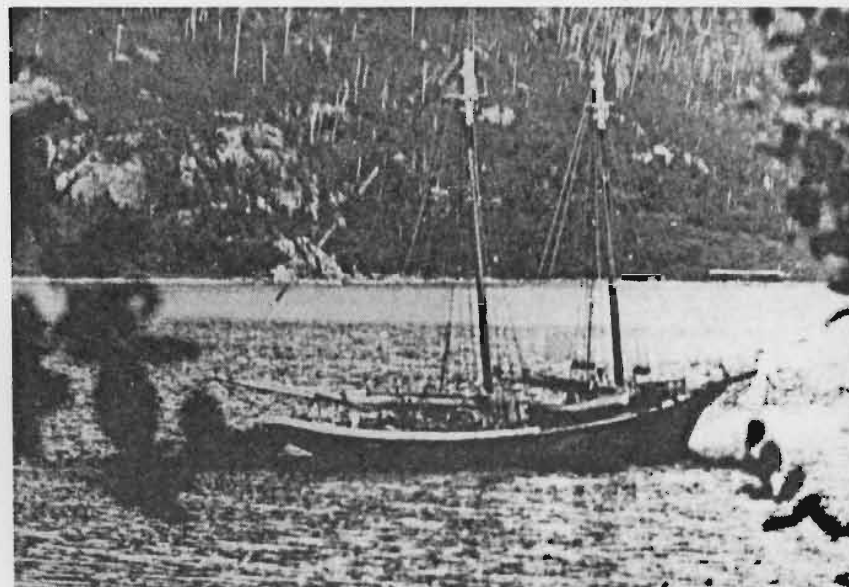
Labrador fish were graded as Choice (a good grade of fish), Prime (a medium grade of fish), and "Cullage". "Cullage" included small fish, fish that were damaged, or fish that were poorly dried.

After the fish were unloaded, and



Grading the fish

if it was not too late in the season, the schooners sometimes made a second trip to Labrador. Some of them went "coasting"; that is, they were employed by merchants and businessmen to transport lumber and other freight. By November, however, most of the schooners were safely anchored for the winter in some cove or harbour.



Anchored for the winter

### Sharing the Catch

Schooners were either privately owned or were owned by merchants in St. John's or the outports. In either case the crew all shared in the profits from the sale of the fish. That is why they were sometimes called "sharemen" instead of fishermen. Methods of sharing the catch were different from place to place. But the owner of the schooner usually claimed half of the total catch. The other half was divided among the other members of the crew. Sometimes the trap "skiffs" and the schooners themselves were given a share. Cooks usually received a half share and boy helpers received a quarter share, depending on the amount of work they had to do.

When prices were high, a share

of 40 quintals of dried fish per man was considered to be a good catch. But in those days fish often sold for as little as \$2.50 per quintal. Today Newfoundland fishermen receive as much as \$80 for a quintal of dried fish.

Not every summer was successful. Sometimes, after spending a long summer on the Labrador coast, many schooners had to return home empty. But that was the kind of risk that fishermen and merchants alike had to face each summer. When fish were plentiful a fisherman could make as much as \$500 a summer; when fish were scarce he had to be satisfied with \$50 or less.

### The Floaters are Gone

After more than two hundred years<sup>123</sup>

of operating, the Labrador floater fishery was finally given up. There are many reasons for this. Some of them are:

(i) Foreign countries could buy better fish elsewhere and did not want to buy the Labrador fish.

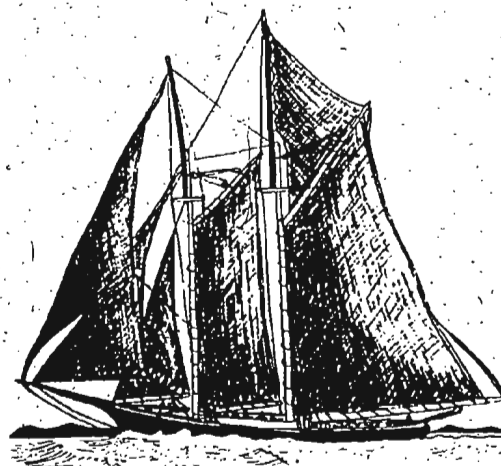
(ii) Fishing in Labrador was often a risky business and fishermen gave it up to find better work elsewhere.

(iii) Young fishermen were not interested in the Labrador fishery.

(iv) Labrador fishermen continued to use old fashioned methods of catching and curing their fish.

Today the Labrador floater fishery is gone and with it the majestic sailing schooners which for such a long time were a colorful part of our history. Summers come and go but no longer do we see hund-

reds of schooners and thousands of men sailing north for the sheltered harbours and coves of the Labrador coast to fish for cod.



SOMETHING TO DO

1. Complete the crossword puzzle.  
The first one down and the first one  
across are done for you.

### 7. Racks used for drying fish

8. Fishermen who fished from the shore

11. This person's job was to remove the "soundbone" from the fish

**DOWN**

1. Labrador fishing schooners

3. Small, damaged, or poorly dried fish

4. A name given to wet, soggy fish \_\_\_\_\_

9. Labrador fishing schooners usually left their home ports in the month of

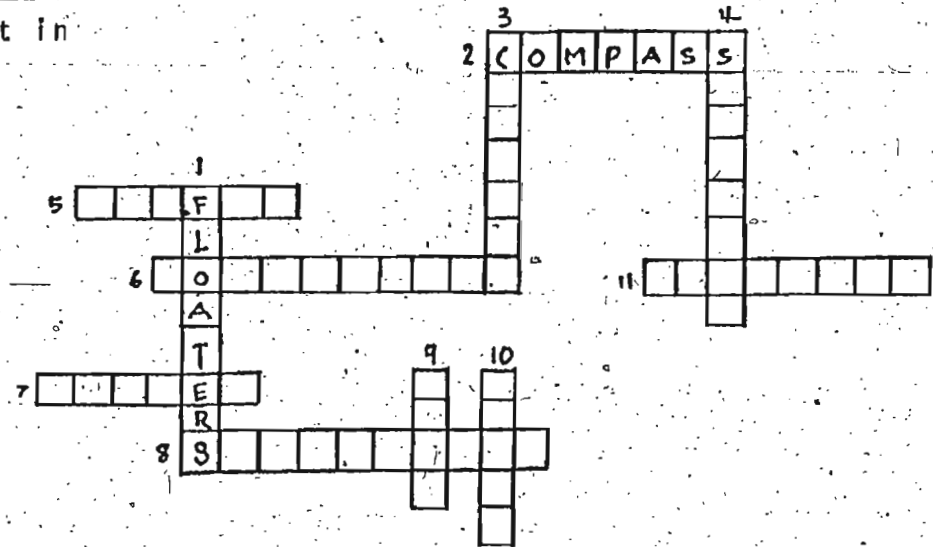
10. A place where the cod trap was set in the water

## ACROSS

2.. The only navigational instrument  
carried by the Labrador schooners

5. Small boats used to help haul the  
cod trap

6. The crew of the schooner ate and slept in the



11. Match each statement in List B with the correct word in List A. Put the letter of the correct word on the line made for you. Number 1 has been done as an example.

LIST A

- A. hogshead
- B. choice
- C. quintal
- D. coasting
- E. cod trap
- F. handline
- G. Cape Chidley
- H. splitting table
- I. trawl
- J. salt

LIST B

- 1. G the northern-most point in Labrador.
- 2.      45 kilograms of salt.
- 3.      used to preserve fish.
- 4.      box-shaped net used to catch fish.
- 5.      long fishing line with hooks attached.
- 6.      where the fish were cleaned.
- 7.      a good grade of fish.
- 8.      transporting lumber and other freight.
- 9.      90 kilograms of salt.
- 10.      single baited hook attached to a long



111. Hidden in the group of letters below are some of the words which helped you learn about the Labrador floater fishery. Go on a hunt and see what you can find. When you find a word, put a circle around it. There are twenty in all. One has been done for you.

H D Q F L O A T E R L B Y X G N O U T P O R T M P U N T  
J S U I S T A T I O N E R B A H O G S H E A D A L E M F  
I N I S K F F X A M P C O M P A S S P L M B A K L O L  
G P N O R K S I L B T I U L Y Z A O P H H G Y P N O I A  
G L T R A W L O L I M S L A B C T I L D C A O Q R N M K  
E T A P F O R E C A S T L E E C A B I N P Q R N S T T E  
R F L L R S M S T I V I A T R O O C T N I G G O P L S S  
P S Q S C H O O N E R I G O T O U A T L M M R F G L G O  
T R X S S O U N D B O N E X S H A R E M E N X Y M N T A  
R U S A L T B U L K T X S G B E R A R T I G T B E R T H

### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. When fish did not come to the coast of Labrador, what did it mean to the floater fishermen? Does it mean the same to fishermen today? Why or why not?

2. Imagine you are the captain of a Labrador floater. You are on the coast of Labrador and you have to find a good place to set a cod trap. What things should you look for in choosing a good trap berth?

3. Labrador floater fishermen did not usually fish on Sundays. How do you think they spent their leisure time on Sundays?

4. Look at the pictures in your booklet. Try to find clues that will tell you that the Labrador floater fishermen had to work hard for a living.

5. Pretend that it is the year 1904. It is early June and you are standing on a wharf in a busy fishing community. Floaters are preparing to leave for the summer voyage to the coast of Labrador. Describe the activity that is going on around you.

6. Pretend that you are standing on the deck of a floater anchored in some cove on the coast of Labrador. It is

late in the afternoon and the trap skiffs have just come in from the cod traps with a full load of fish. Describe the scene you see.

7. Imagine that you are the captain of a Labrador floater. You are just leaving for the coast of Labrador. Make a daily record of the events that take place along the way.

8. A statement on page 6 of this booklet says that only the basic food like flour, butter, sugar, beans, and molasses was taken on board the schooner. Pretend that you are the cook aboard a Labrador schooner. Describe some of the meals you would serve the crew.

9. It is a warm day in early August. Several floaters have returned from the Labrador coast with full loads of fish. Describe the activity that is going on in the community.

10. Imagine that you have spent a whole summer on board a floater on the Labrador coast. Tell your classmates about some of your experiences.

11. Imagine that you are visiting with a retired Labrador floater fisherman. Prepare a list of questions you would want to ask him.

12. How was the floater fishery like our modern-day fishery? How was it different?

## APPENDIX

APPENDIX A  
Newspaper Clippings

THE EVENING TELEGRAM, JUNE 26, 1914

## Northern Fishing Fleet.

The accompanying list shows the number of vessels cleared for the Straits and Labrador up to the 20th inst., as posted at the Board of Trade Rooms yesterday:

District	Vessels	Tons	No. of Persons
Conception Hr.	1	54	34
Hr. Main	3	141	63
Brigus	21	1374	1059
Bay Roberts	4	234	194
Hr. Grace	12	659	435
Carbonear	11	569	351
Trinity	29	1793	476
Catalina	11	487	92
King's Cove	2	125	27
Greenspond	70	2224	495
Herring Neck	6	348	50
Twillingate	47	2123	357
Exploits	5	147	31
Bonne Bay	7	175	42
Channel	8	102	28
Belleoram	2	69	13
Total	239	10584	3757



## The Fishermen's Advocate

Our  
Motto:



"Suum  
Cuique"

PORT UNION, Nfld., FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1938

### The Labrador Fishery

Supplying for the Labrador fishery has been in progress during the past three weeks, and most of the schooners that will prosecute the fishery this year have now been outfitted, while those not yet supplied but which have supplies assured them will be outfitted within the next ten days or so. By the end of next week several schooners will have sailed for the Labrador, providing weather conditions do not detain them.

On the whole, outfitting has been much later this spring than was thought would be the case late in March and early in April. Weather conditions about that time gave promise of an early spring, but the bad weather experienced during practically the whole of May month retarded the fishermen in their preparations for the fishery. Then, again, from the business point of view, supplying merchants somewhat puzzled over the outlook, were hesitant to give undertakings of supplying. This hesitancy was also shared by many independent schooner masters, who were not over zealous about prosecuting the fishery in view of the outlook. However, doubt has given way to a mild optimism and the work of outfitting and supplying has speeded up during the past fortnight.

It is not possible, just yet, to say how many schooners will clear for the fishery this season from Northern ports. Accurate information on that point will only be obtainable when all have cleared through the Customs. Around the end of June the Customs authorities should be in a position to publish statistics as to the total number of schooners cleared for the Treaty Shore, Straits and Labrador fisheries, the total number of men they carried as well as the number of men who have gone to the coast as stationers. There will not be as many schooners prosecuting the fishery this year as last and it would appear that the number of stationers who come mostly from Conception Bay ports, will probably be at least 25 per cent less than last year.

THE FISHERMEN'S ADVOCATE, OCTOBER 23, 1936

## Labradormen Less By 110

One hundred and ten fewer schooners, "floaters," conducted the Labrador voyage exclusively this year than last, show customs statistics.

In 1935 the number of Labradormen (exclusive of bank vessels which fished on Labrador after the bank voyage) was 356. This season the number was 246.

The total for all schooners which cleared for Labrador (northern Labradormen and bankers inclusive) in 1935 was 370 vessels with crews of 2911 men. This year the total was only 256 vessels with 2057 men.

From these figures it is difficult to estimate the reduction in personnel of the bonafide Labradormen, that is vessels from northern ports which spend the whole summer on Labrador exclusively, but it is probable that some eight hundred fewer northern fishermen went to Labrador this summer.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

## The Fishermen's Advocate

Our  
Motto:



"Suum  
Cuique"

PORT UNION, NFLD., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1933

### Labrador Fish

We are informed by the shippers of the "Lutzen" cargo, of Labrador fish, that the cargo turned out satisfactory at Malaga. This, we are pleased to learn, for the sake of the reputation of this season's cure of Labrador fish shipped to Spain.

We also learn that a shipment of salt-bulk shipped to Piraeus, Greece, turned out satisfactory. The fish was salted well and split well. The price paid for it was a dollar and twenty below the price paid for the cured article.

The recent advance on the price paid for Labrador fish, was not a result of improved prices in Europe, where prices are no firmer than they were a month ago, but is due to the fact that a Porto Rico buyer wanted ten thousand quintals for that market. The last direct steamer taking fish to Porto Rico took twenty thousand quintals of Labrador cure. Such a large quantity entering a market cannot help to maintain prices. Porto Rico apparently likes the Labrador fish, and seems to prefer it to Shore cure. The supply of Porto Rico Shore fish, from Newfoundland, being very limited this season, the dealers there are meeting the requirements with the Labrador cured article.

There is no indication yet that the demand from Porto Rico for Labrador fish has influenced the prices of Labrador in the European markets.

Porto Rico the past two or three years has purchased large quantities of Labrador cured codfish, because of its cheapness. Consequently all Shore cured codfish from other countries has been practically driven off that market. This proved a blessing for Newfoundland, and at present is responsible for the rise in values paid recently at St. John's for Labrador fish.

THE FISHERMEN'S ADVOCATE, SEPTEMBER 19, 1941

## Labrador Fishery Report

Reports from the Labrador say that the fishing season is over and most of the fishing fleet has left or is preparing to leave. The season this year struck an all-time low, or thereabouts, as far as weather conditions went. Ice, cold hard winds and driving rain halted operations day after day. Mountainous seas tore up many traps and the icy waters made this voyage a continuous round of hardships with, in many cases, poor returns. We are told that the average catch on the coast is 500 qtls.

Capt. Peters of Melrose, to whom we are indebted for some of this information, arrived from the Labrador in McCormack and Walsh's vessel on Wednesday morning. He has approximately 600 qtls.

Following are reports on some of the Trading Company's vessels: Capt. Harry Andrews arrives home yesterday with 950 on board. Capt. George Blackwood has about 1600 qtls., Capt. Charlie Blackwood and Peter Blackwood have about 500 qtls. each, Capt. Wm. Rott Spurrell has 600 qtls. Capt. Wm. Hynes has 600 qtls. and Capt. Den Hynes has about 1,000 qtls. Capt. Nathan Spurrell has about 600 qtls. and Capt. Stanford has 900 qtls. and is enroute home. Capt. Malcolm Rogers is home with 600 qtls. and about a month ago Capt. Robert Bannister had between 500 and 600 qtls. Other company vessels have not been heard from.

None of the schooners from S. W. Mifflin's firm have been reported except Capt. Pickett, who has in the vicinity of 500 qtls.

Reports of other vessels tell of Capt. Ned Blackwood with 2200 qtls.; Capt. Stead with 500 qtls. and Capt. James of Hant's Hr. with 500 qtls.

It is also reported that the Flat Island schooners averaged only 300 qtls., while of the fourteen vessels that sailed from the Labrador with Capt. Peters, the average catch was not up to the 500 qtl. mark.

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## The Fishermen's Advocate

PORT UNION, N.F.L.D., FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1941

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### Government Guarantees Price of Fish

The Government has fixed the minimum price of Labrador fish at \$5.00 per qtl. with price differences for other grades of Labrador fish corresponding to last year's scale and the 1940 Fisheries Assistance Act.

Small Maderia is guaranteed at \$0.00 per qtl. with other grades of shore fish at a scale corresponding to last year.

The guarantee applies to fish that may be sold, but does not apply to surplus stocks which may be left on the suppliers' hands.

The Government will levy 50 cents per qtl. on all fish exported, as a fund to stand against possible losses sustained under the guarantee system. Should there be monies left over the Government will return 75 per cent of such monies to the fishermen in the form of a bonus, while the remaining 25 per cent will be held in reserve to finance a guarantee in the future.

We think that the guaranteed price of \$5.00 per qtl. for Labrador fish is a substantial improvement over last year's \$3.50 in spite of the advanced cost of supplies. Roughly \$3.50 per qtl. last year would be about the same as \$4.50 this year, thus at the present guaranteed price the fisherman is 50 cents per qtl. better off.

—o—

THE TWILLINGATE SUN, JULY 1, 1901

## THE DEPARTURE OF OUR LABRADOR FLEET.

THE favorable change of wind which took place the early part of the week has enabled our Labrador fleet to take their departure for the scene of their summer's avocation. It has often been remarked by many, better conversant with the subject than we are, that too much of the early part of the spring generally elapses before our people make the necessary preparation for engaging in the prosecution of the fishery. This, however, may not apply so much to the people in this direction as to those residing in the more southern settlements. It is a fact, that almost every season considerable quantities of ice are upon the coast until late in the spring, so that when an effort is made on the part of those interested to start early a good deal of ice is sometimes encountered with, and the delay thus incurred is very often longer and the expenses greater than if they had not left for some time after. Owing to the prevalence of north-east winds during the past few weeks, it is feared that even up to this late date the ice will interfere with their getting to the Labrador coast in time to be ready for operations when the fish strike in. As the season is so far advanced we trust that there may be no hindrance in their course to cause further delay so that should the fish not have made their appearance before arriving, they may be in time to reap a plentiful harvest and be permitted to return after a short absence well laden with the treasures of the deep.

Of late years the fish appear to be forsaking many of their former places of resort and have to be sought after in the more extreme northern portions of the coast, many of the craft having to go down some six or eight hundred miles. For this purpose our merchants have supplied their planters with a class of craft specially adapted for the requirements of the trade, so that the precarious enterprise in which they are engaged may be more successfully prosecuted. Our merchants here have supplied largely for the fisheries this season. We earnestly hope that the pecuniary results of the enterprise may be such as to fully remunerate them for the very large amount of capital which they have invested for the good of our people and the colony generally.

Since the friends have left in pursuit of their business the activity which has characterised our quiet little town for some weeks since, has somewhat abated. Now that the busy season is passed let us hope that our young athletic sportsmen may devise some means of recreation in order that the monotony so peculiar to smaller towns may, to some extent, be enlivened.



APPENDIX B  
Documents

THE SALT CODFISH EXPORTATION BOARD

140

CHAIRMAN,

D. JAMES DAVIES

ST. JOHN'S.

NEWFOUNDLAND

October 18th. 1933

Hon. F.C. Alderdice,  
Prime Minister,  
City.

Dear Mr. Alderdice:

I have discussed the advantages of setting up a Curing Station on the Coast of Labrador with many of the Labrador skippers now in St. John's. I intend to interview many more of them as they arrive with their fish. Those that I have met already are very much in favour of the idea.

35      Floaters on the Labrador often get their full load of fish before the end of July, so that the time devoted to actual fishing is just one month or less out of the year. Having obtained their full loads, they start for their homes to make their fish.

If there was a Curing Station at some central place on the coast, the first full loads could be taken to the Station and sold as wet-salted, and the floaters could then proceed once more to the fishing grounds and bring their second loads home for curing, as they are doing at the present time. In this way the present Labrador catch could be very considerably increased, even with the present equipment and personnel.

The Curing Station would have to be situated at a place where the necessary labour is available, such as somewhere in the vicinity of Battle Harbour. The fish could be stored in the Station in salt-bulk until about the 25th. of August when curing could be started.

If too plentiful a supply of fish were being brought to the Station, a good deal could be sent to the Markets as wet-salted and washed-and-pressed, packed in bales of one quintal.

The building would be a big, plain wooden

Hon. F.C. Alderdice, Prime Minister.

CONTINUED, SHEET 2.

structure, preferably with concrete floor. A plentiful supply of running water is essential. Down the centre of the building there should be large tubs of running water and a rail in front. On the other side of the rail, and opposite each tub, there should be a wooden draining box to receive the fish after washing and each fish should be examined before being taken in to the fish piles.

A separate Warehouse should be built for the storage of the Cured fish. A space should be set aside in the Warehouse for the storage of wire flakes.

36 Material for the building of the Station should be in readiness, and should be taken to the neighbourhood of Battle Harbour, as soon as navigation opens. The Curing Station should be ready for the fish by the end of July.

To avoid too much handling, and to reduce expenses, the fish, whether in casks or bulk, should be sent direct to the Markets from the Station.

I am writing you about this matter as I want to keep the erection of a Curing Station a live subject. It may be better to await the Report of the Royal Commission before going into details, but in the meantime I intend to keep interviewing the skippers and possibly I may bring it before my Advisory Committee.

Yours sincerely,

*F. James Davis*

DJD/WMM.

Chairman.

October 27th, 1933.

Dear Mr. Davies,

Although we have discussed the subject matter of your letter of the 18th instant I have not formerly acknowledged its receipt and this I am now doing.

I am very much in favour of the setting up of a Curing Station or Stations on the coast of Labrador and should be much obliged if you would obtain from Labrador Skippers as they visit St. John's all the information possible and get their ideas as to the practicability of the scheme and, if favourable to it, the best location for the erection of such a station.

It would be advisable also for you to find out what material would be required for the erection of the station so that during the winter months we might arrange for the recipients to prepare it for shipment to Labrador next Spring.

Doubtless by this time you have had Mr. Stone's opinion of your suggestion and I feel very sure that he would be inclined to view the proposition with favour.

Yours faithfully,

F.C. Alderdice

D.J. Davies Esq., C.B.B.  
Chairman,  
Salt Codfish Exportation Board,  
City.

CABLE ADDRESS: "NUFISH" | MONTREAL:  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

P. O. BOX NO 727.  
TELEPHONE NO 104.

143

NEWFOUNDLAND ATLANTIC FISHERIES, LIMITED.

HEAD OFFICE: ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

BRANCH OFFICE  
MONTREAL, CANADA.

November 26, 1919.

(C O P Y)

Minister of Marine and Fisheries  
C I T Y.

Dear Sir:-

We beg to apply for licence, or permit, to  
ship the following quantity of #1 Labrador Fish:-

2000 quintals for Liverpool  
450 " " London

To the best of our knowledge this fish is  
for consumption in England, and was sold when Labrador  
Fish was practically unsaleable here in the market at  
\$8.00 per quintal.

We have asked the Furness Withy Company to  
reserve space for this amount to go forward by the  
"Digby". If you will not grant us a permit we would  
respectfully ask that you advise us immediately to en-  
able us to make arrangements to send it by a sailing  
vessel, sailing for the Mediterranean next week; this  
would allow us a very short time to wire the people in  
England to whom we sold the fish.

We may add that one lot of this fish was sold  
for 58/ c.i.f. Liverpool, credit was opened here at the  
Bank for same. The other lot was sold for 56/6 c.i.f.  
Liverpool, Cash against Documents.

A reply at your earliest convenience will ob-  
lige,

Yours truly,

NEWFOUNDLAND ATLANTIC FISHERIES LTD.

T. HALLETT

MANAGER.

CABLE ADDRESS: "NUFISH" { MONTREAL,  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

P. O. BOX 114 727.  
TELEPHONE NO. 154.

144

NEWFOUNDLAND ATLANTIC FISHERIES, LIMITED.

HEAD OFFICE: ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

BRANCH OFFICE  
MONTREAL, CANADA.

December 4, 1919.

Hon. R. A. Squires, K. C.,  
Prime Minister,  
St. John's- Newfoundland.

Dear Sir:-

39 In October I sold 2,000 quintals Labrador Fish to a firm in Liverpool, and 1,000 quintals to a firm in London. The one thousand quintals was sold c.i.f. Liverpool, cash against documents. Five hundred and fifty of the one thousand went forward by the "Sachem"; this left a balance of four hundred and ninety casks, for which I had space booked on the "Digby". Under the new regulations brought into force by the new Minister of Marine and Fisheries I was not allowed to ship unless guarantees were given that the fish would not be sold under a certain price, or not re-exported from England.

I am enclosing copy of letter written to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and the same was written to the Minister of Shipping the same date, November 26th.

I received the following message from the Firm to whom I had to ship ninety (90) casks:-

"SHIP BALANCE CODFISH QUICKLY SOLD TO  
ENGLISH BUYERS".

I can ship this, only, if I guarantee that this will not be re-exported, and if this firm, in spite of the message sent me, re-exports this fish I shall lose my license. But to keep up my part of the contract, and to take part of the space reserved by the Furness Withy Company, I am taking this chance.

cont.



CABLE ADDRESS: "NUFISH" MONTREAL, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

P.O. BOX No. 727.  
TELEPHONE No. 164.

145

**NEWFOUNDLAND ATLANTIC FISHERIES, LIMITED.**

HEAD OFFICE: ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

BRANCH OFFICE  
MONTREAL, CANADA.

Hon. R. A. S.

-2-

4/12/19

The other firm to whom I had to ship four hundred (400) casks wired me:-

"WE NOW CANCEL ORDER CANNOT GUARANTEE  
CONSUMPTION IN ENGLAND".

This made it impossible for me to ship by the "Digby", and as it is imperative that I get some of the fish away I immediately had to make arrangements, as per my letter to them of November 26th, to get what I could on board the "Stella" before she was completely booked up.

I now find that the Furness Withy Company are expecting me to take the space that I applied for, and that the Marine and Fisheries has notified them that I only applied for a permit for ninety (90) casks.

Before booking the space on the "Stella", I saw the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, the Minister of Shipping, Mr. Bert Job, and others. I explained the whole matter to them, and showed the Minister of Marine and Fisheries Department my message.

You can appreciate my position, but if the Government steps in and will not allow me to take space that I had filled, unless giving guarantees which is utterly impossible in the face of the messages that I have quoted I think it is only fair that they should be called upon to make up any deficit with the carriers, due to the stringent measures that they have put into force.

I had this fish sold "Cash against Documents", and would have had my money as soon as the fish was shipped. To try to comply with the new regulations I have shipped this on consignment, now to find that I may be held responsible for the freight space that the Government will not allow me to fill.

You will pardon me for bringing this under your special notice, but in this case if I had to have more fish

cont.

CABLE ADDRESS: "NUPIBII" MONTREAL,  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND.

P. O. Box 111 721  
TELEPHONE NO. 164

146

NEWFOUNDLAND ATLANTIC FISHERIES, LIMITED.

HEAD OFFICE: ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

BRANCH OFFICE  
MONTREAL, CANADA.

Hon. R. A. S.

-3-

4/12/19

held up it would possibly be the means of putting me  
in the "Insolvency Courts", and if I am compelled to  
pay this freight it will have the same effect.

Respectfully yours,

*J. H. Hallett*

Enc.

K.

Prime Minister's Office,  
St. John's, Newfoundland.

Confidential.

2 November, 1914.

His Excellency  
The Governor.

It occurred to me that it would be probably worth while asking the authorities in England whether they would not be prepared to buy some of our salted fish which could be delivered in England now at a rate considerably less I think than the food they are now feeding the German prisoners on.

I enclose you some figures in this report which have been supplied me by Hon. W.C. Job.

(Sd) E.P. MORRIS,

Prime Minister.

Government House,

St. John's,

4 November, 1914.

NEWFOUNDLAND.CONFIDENTIAL.

Sir,

I have the honour to annex copies of correspondences on the subject of the supply of salt fish from Newfoundland to the Navy and Army on active service. It is a nutritious article of diet; popular with the men; it was largely used in the Peninsula War in feeding our troops in Spain; and the present price for Labrador fish is very reasonable.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

The Right Honourable

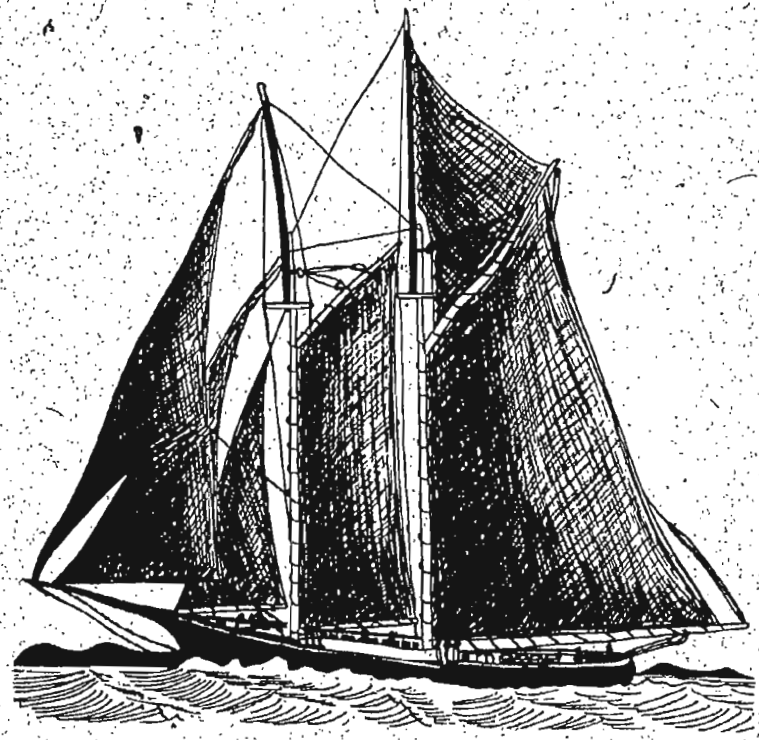
Lewis Harcourt, M.P.

149

APPENDIX C  
Magazine Article

44

# THE FLEET ON THE LABRADOR





THE FLEET ON THE LABRADOR

by

Norman Duncan,

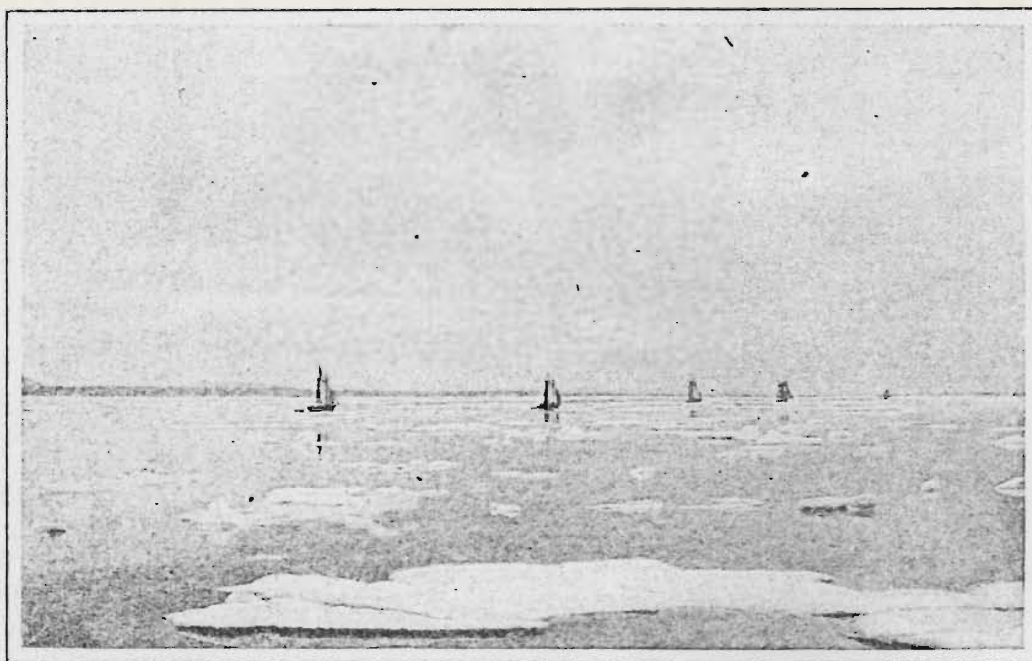
Reproduced from

Harper's Monthly Magazine

Volume 108; May, 1904

Harper & Brothers Publishers

New York and London



Photograph by Holloway

BOUND NORTH TO THE LABRADOR COAST

## The Fleet on "The Labrador"

BY NORMAN DUNCAN

"THE Labrador" is a forbidding coast, indeed—naked, rugged, desolate, lying sombre in a mist. It is of weather-worn gray rock, broken at intervals by long ribs of black. In part it is low and ragged, slowly rising, by way of bare slopes and starved forest, to broken mountain ranges, which lie blue and bold in the inland waste. Elsewhere it rears from the edge of the sea in stupendous cliffs and lofty, rugged hills. There is no inviting stretch of shore the length of it—no sandy beach, no line of shingle, no grassy bank; the sea washes a thousand miles of jagged rock. Were it not for the harbors—innumerable and snugly sheltered from the winds and ground-swell of the open—there would be no navigating the waters of that region.

The Straits Shore, along which the great ships steam a nervous course, is

buoyed, lighted, minutely charted. The reefs and currents and tickles\* and harbors are all known. A northeast gale, to be sure, raises a commotion in those parts, and fog and drift-ice add something to the chance of disaster; but, as they say, from one peril there are two ways of escape to three sheltered places. The schooners ride at anchor with harbor near at hand; while the gales are brewing, they fly to shelter. Thereabouts, fishing is dull toil, without adventure apart from the routine of danger—mere familiar peril, which is not adventure, properly speaking, at all.

"No, zur," say the skippers; "this ain't nothin' but hard work!"

To the north, however, where the Labrador fleet goes to fish, the coast is best sailed on the plan of the skipper of the

\* A "tickle" is a narrow passage to a harbor or between two islands.

## THE FLEET ON "THE LABRADOR."

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old *Twelve Brothers*. Said he, "You don't cotch *me* meddlin' with no land!" Past the Dead Islands, Snug Harbor, Domino Run, Devil's Lookout and the Quaker's Hat—beyond Johnny Paul's Rock and the Wolves, Sandwich Bay, Tumble-down Dick, Indian Harbor, and the White Cockade—past Cape Harrigan, the Farmyard Islands and the Hen and Chickens—far north to the great, craggy hills and strange peoples of Kikkertad-soak, Scoralik, Tunnulusoak, Nain, Okak, and, at last, to Cape Chidley itself—northward, every crooked mile of the way bold headlands, low outlying islands, sunken reefs, tides, fogs, great winds and snow make hard sailing of it.

It is an evil coast, ill-charted where charted at all; some part of the present-day map is based upon the guesswork of the eighteenth-century navigators. The skippers of the fishing-craft sail by guess and hearsay, by recollection and old rhymes: a heroic voyage, ventured every summer, for sake of the cod to be caught.

In the thousand harbors of Newfoundland, whence, in the spring, the fleet sails north—twenty-five thousand stout fellows in little ships—there sounds a call to this adventure. Granted only that the heart of the man is true, he hears a call—persuasive, insistent, inevitable: it is real as a bugle note. The lads' hero is the skipper who knows the waters "off Chidley"—some weather-beaten old fellow, thick and broad about the chest and lanky below, long-armed, hammer-fisted, with a frowzy beard, bushy brows, and clear blue eyes which are strong and quick to look. He is most glorious when in from the Labrador, still sea-booted, oilskin-

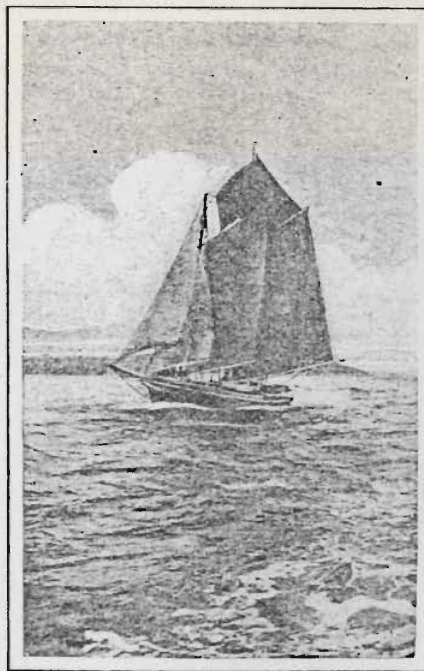
clad, dripping the spray of the night's gale from beard and sou'wester, with his feet on a wet deck, his fish dry below, and his big bow anchor gripping the bottom of the home port.

That's the man—that's the moment—to stir the deeps of the heart of Davy Roth o' Whaleback Harbor in Bonavist' Bay! Can the skipper say no more than, "Oh, I isn't been down no further 'n Indian," he is a commonplace fellow, however lucky with the fish; can he answer, with brisk pride, "How far down I been? Mugford, zur!" he earns some measure of respect; but let him once boast, "Oh, I been t' *Chidley*!" and he can do no more—win no more. The man who has sailed his schooner into the marvellous harbors of the far north—the man who

has set eyes on the dark, dumpy little women who wear sealskin trousers, and carry babies on their backs—is the man for Davy Roth o' Bonavist' Bay. Aside from that, to have gone and come again—to have taken salt into strange seas and to have brought forth fish—is the incomparable achievement; and you may be sure that Davy knows it well enough. Says he, in his heart: "*I'll* do that when I'm growed up; 'n' I 'low I'll go further 'n *he* done—oncet I'm growed up!"

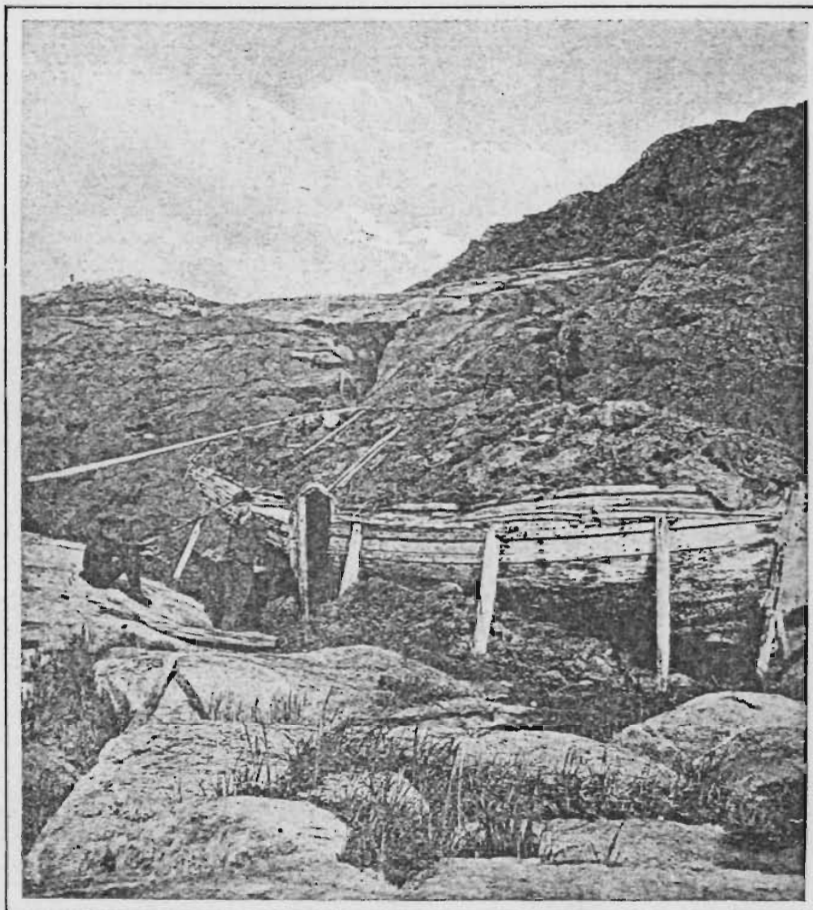
On winter nights, the lad gives ear to long tales of far-away harbors and queer folk. Of such

are those which begin: "Well, 'twas the wonderfulest gale o' wind you ever seed—snowin' an' blowin', with the sea in mountains, an' it as black as a wolf's throat—an' we was somewheres off Cape Mugford. She were drivin' fair with a nor'east gale, with the shore somewheres handy t' l'eward. But, look! nar a one of us knowed where she



NORTHWARD WITH A FAIR WIND





A "BULLY BOAT" TURNED INTO A DWELLING

were to, 'less 'twas in the thick o' the Thirty Devil Reefs. . . ." To this he listens with wide-open eyes and mouth and ears, from his corner by the glowing stove; and says he, to himself, "I 'low I'd know where she were to, an I were skipper o' she!"

Just so, no doubt, the Scandinavian lads of a thousand years ago were moved by tales told o' winter nights.

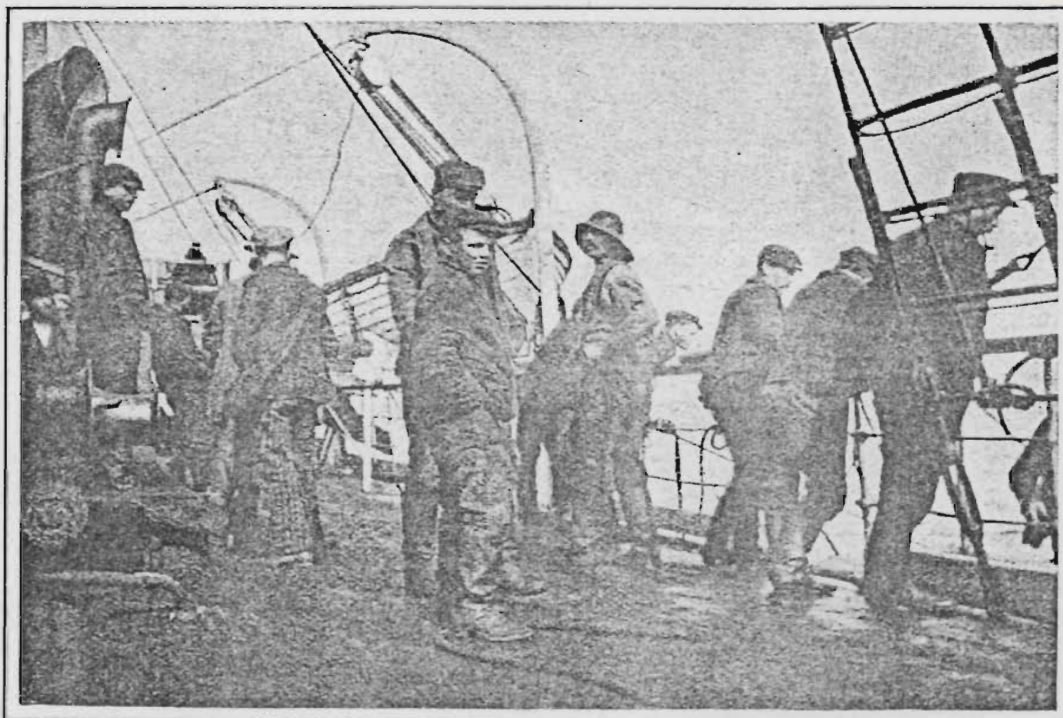
In the early spring—when the sunlight is yellow and the warm winds blow and the melting snow drips over the cliffs and runs in little rivulets from the barren hills—in the harbors of all the coast the great fleet is made ready for the long adventure. The rocks echo the noise of hammer and saw and mallet and the song and shout of the workers. The new schooners—building the winter long at

bred for the purpose, to the powerful dealer who supplies on shares a fleet of seventeen fore-and-afters manned from the harbors of a great bay, there is hope in the hearts of all. Whatever the last season, every man is to make a good "voyage" now. This season—*this* season—there is to be fish a-plenty on the Labrador!

The future is bright as the new spring days. Aunt Matilda is to have a bonnet with feathers—when Skipper Thomas gets home from the Labrador. Little Johnny Tatt, he of the crooked back, is to know again the virtue of Pike's Pain Compound, at a dollar a bottle, warranted to cure—when daddy gets home from the Labrador. Skipper Bill's Lizzie, plump, blushing, merry-eyed, is to wed Jack Lute o' Burnt Arm—when Jack comes back from the Labrador. Every man's heart, and, indeed, most men's fortunes,

the harbor side—are hurried to completion. The old craft—the weather-beaten, ragged oldcraft, which, it may be, have dodged the reefs and outlived the gales of forty seasons—are fitted with new spars, patched with new canvas and rope, calked anew, daubed anew, and, thus refitted, float brave enough on the quiet harbor water. There is no end to the bustle of labor on ships and nets—no end to the clatter of planning. From the skipper of the ten-ton *First Venture*, who sails with a crew of sons





ON THE DECK OF THE MAIL-BOAT

are in the venture. The man who has nothing has yet the labor of his hands. Be he skipper, there is one to back his skill and honesty; be he hand, there is no lack of berths to choose from. Skippers stand upon their record and schooners upon their reputation; it's take your choice, for the hands are not too many: the skippers are timid or bold, as God made them; the schooners are lucky or not, as Fate determines. Every man has his chance. John Smith o' Twillingate provisions the *Lucky Queen* and gives her to the penniless Skipper Jim o' Yellow Tickle on shares. Old Tom Tatter o' Salmon Cove, with plea and argument, persuades the Four Arms trader to trust him once again with the *Busy Bee*. He'll get the fish *this* time. Nar a doubt of it! He'll be home in August—this year—loaded to the gunwale. God knows who pays the cash when the fish fail! God knows how the folk survive the disappointment! It is a great lottery of hope and fortune.

When, at last, word comes south that

the ice is clearing from the coast, the vessels spread their little wings to the first favoring winds; and in a week—two weeks or three—the last of the Labrador-men have gone “down north.” The way is spread with dangers—the perils of ice and wind and reef and black fog. These are infinitely strong: the craft are tiny before them; but the hearts of the men are greater far than the toil and peril of the way. Little ships, indeed, they are—not great vessels, with a towering spread of canvas, whose security is in open water; the Labrador fleet is a fleet of doughty schooners—a white cloud of sail whose escape is into harbor. Most are little more than open boats: you must stoop when you enter the cabin, you can stand on the rail and rock them; they are of ten tons burden, of twenty, thirty, fifty, rarely of eighty or a hundred; and most are sailed by the hands that builded them in the harbors from which they hail.

It makes a man's heart swell and flutter to watch them dig their noses into the swelling seas—to see them heel and leap and make the white dust fly—to feel the

rush of the wet wind that drives them, and to hear the swish of the frothy waste they toss upon—to know that the gray path of a thousand miles is every league of the way beset with peril. Brave craft, these—brave hearts to sail them! Hopeful hearts they carry—sad hearts they leave behind. The man who looks on turns to the suddy coast, lying low and black in the west—and to the leaden, ice-strewn seas of the north—and to the murky night creeping in from the open sea; and it may be that he sighs, and sighs again, while he watches the driving mist obscure the fleet behind.

The gusts and great waves of open water—of the free, wide sea, I mean, over which a ship may safely drive while the weather exhausts its evil mood—are menace enough for the stoutest heart. But the voyage of the Labrador fleet is inshore—a winding course among the islands, or a straight one from headland to headland, of a coast off which reefs lie thick; low-lying, jagged ledges, washed by the sea in heavy weather; barren hills, rising abruptly—and all isolated—from safe water; sunken rocks, disclosed, upon approach, only by the green swirl above them. Countless they are—scattered everywhere, hidden and disclosed. They lie in the mouths of harbors, they lie close to the coast, they lie offshore; they run twenty miles out to sea. Here is no plain sailing; the skipper must be sure of the way—or choose it gingerly: else the hidden rock will inevitably "pick him up."

To know the submerged rocks of one harbor and the neighboring coast, however evil the place, is small accomplishment. The Newfoundland lad of seven years would count himself his father's shame if he failed in so little. High tide and low tide, quiet sea and heavy swell, he will know where he can take the punt—the depth of water, to an inch, which overlies the danger spots. But here are a hundred harbors—a thousand miles of coast—with reefs and islands scattered like dust the length of it. The Labrador skipper must know it all like his own back yard—not in sunny weather alone, but in the night, when the headlands are like black clouds ahead, and in the mist, when the noise of breakers tells him all that he may know of his whereabouts. A flash of white in the gray distance, a thud

and swish from a hidden place: the one is his beacon, the other his fog-horn. It is enough; he crawls into harbor.

You may chart rocks, and beware of them; but—it is a proverb on the coast—"there's no chart for icebergs." The Labrador current is charged with them—hard, dead-white glacier ice from the Arctic: massive bergs, innumerable, all the while shifting with tide and current, and wind. What with floes and bergs—vast fields of drift-ice—the way north in the spring is most perilous. The skippers are in haste to make their berths: it is a race from the south for best places; they push on—push into the thick of the ice—long before the coast is clear of the first of the drift. The same bergs—widely scattered; diminished in number, dwarfed by the milder climate—give the transatlantic passenger evil dreams: somewhere in the night, somewhere in the mist, thinks he, they may lie; and he shudders. The skipper of the Labrador schooner knows that they lie thick around him: there is no surmise; when the night fell, when the fog closed in, there were a hundred to be counted from the masthead.

Violent winds are always to be feared—swift, overwhelming hurricanes: winds that catch the fleet unaware and wreck it in a night. They are not frequent; but they do blow—will again blow, no man can tell when. In such a gale, forty vessels were driven on a lee shore; in another, eighty were wrecked overnight—two thousand fishermen cast away, the coast littered with splinters of ships—and, once (it is but an incident), a schooner was torn from her anchors and flung on the rocks forty feet above the high-water mark. These are exceptional storms; the common Labrador gale is not so violent, but evil enough in its own way. It is a northeaster, of which the barometer more often than not gives fair warning; day after day it blows, cold, wet, foggy, dispiriting, increasing in violence, subsiding, returning again, until courage and strength are both worn out. Meantime, it stirs up the sea; the waves break over islands thirty feet high, and leap fifty feet up the sides of the precipices.

Reefs, drift-ice, wind and sea—and over all the fog: thick, wide-spread, per-



sistent, swift in coming, mysterious in movement; it compounds the dangers. It blinds men—they curse it, while they grope along: a desperate business, indeed, thus to run by guess where positive knowledge of the way merely mitigates the peril. There are days when the fog lies like a thick blanket on the face of the sea, hiding the head-sails from the man at the wheel; it is night on deck, and broad day—with the sun in a blue sky—at the masthead; the schooner is steered by a man aloft. The *Always Loaded*, sixty tons and bound home with a cargo that did honor to her name, struck one of the outlying islands so suddenly, so violently, that the lookout in the bow, who had been peering into the mist, was pitched headlong into the surf. The *Daughter*, running blind with a fair, light wind—she had been lost for a day—ran full tilt into a cliff; the men ran forward from the soggy gloom of the after-deck into—bright sunshine at the bow! It is the fog that wrecks ships. "Oh, I runned her ashore," says the castaway skipper. "Thick? Why, sure, 'twas thick!" So men hate it, fear it, avoid it when they can, which is seldom; they are not afraid of wind and sea, but there are times when they shake in their sea-boots, if the black fog catches them out of harbor.

At Indian Harbor I went aboard the schooner *Jolly Crew*. It was a raw, foggy day, with a fresh northeast gale blowing, and a high sea running outside the harbor. They were splitting ~~fish~~ on deck; the skiff was just in from the trap—she was still wet with spray.

"I sails with me sons an' gran'sons, zur," said the skipper, smiling. "Sure, I be a old feller t' be down the Labrador, isn't I, zur?"

He did not mean that. He was proud of his age and strength—glad that he was still able "t' be at the fishin'."

"Tis a wonder you've lived through it all," said I.

He laughed. "An' why, zur?" he asked.

"Many's the ship wrecked on this coast," I answered.

"Oh no, zur," said he; "not so many, zur, as you might think. Down this way, zur, we knows how t' sail!"

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That was a succinct explanation of very much that had puzzled me.

"Ah, well," said I, "'tis a hard life."

"Hard?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Yes," I answered; "'tis a hard life—the fishin'."

"Oh no, zur," said he, quietly, looking up from his work. "'Tis just—just life!"

They do, indeed, know how "t' sail." The Newfoundland government, niggardly and utterly independable when the good of the fisherfolk is concerned, of whatever complexion the government may chance to be, but, prodigal to an extraordinary degree when individual self-interests are at stake—this is a delicate way of putting an unpleasant truth,—keeps no light burning beyond the Strait of Belle Isle; the best it does, I believe, is to give wrecked seamen free passage home. Under these difficult circumstances, no seamen save Newfoundlanders, who are the most skilful and courageous of all, could sail that coast: and they only because they are born to follow the sea—there is no escape for them—and are bred to sailing from their earliest years.

"What you going to be when you grow up?" I once asked a lad on the far north-east coast.

He looked at me in vast astonishment.

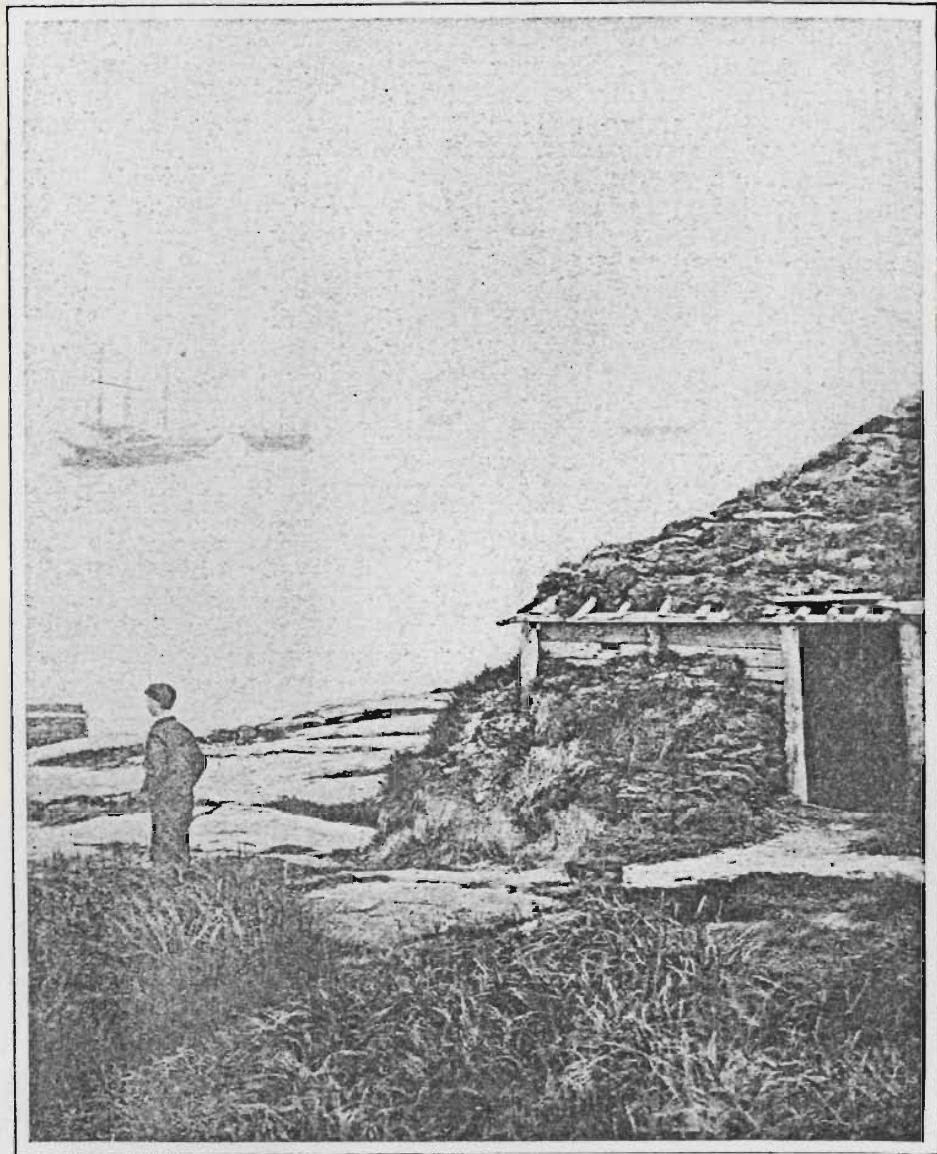
"What you going to be, what you going to do," I repeated, "when you grow up?"

Still he did not comprehend. "Eh?" he said.

"What you going to work at," said I, in desperation, "when you're a man?"

"Oh, zur," he answered, understanding at last, "I isn't clever enough t' be a parson!"

And so it went without saying that he was to fish for a living! It is no wonder, then, that the skippers of the fleet know "how t' sail." The remarkable quality of the sea-captains who come from among them impressively attests the fact—not only their quality as sailors, but as men of spirit and proud courage. There is one—now a captain of a coastal boat on the Newfoundland shore—who takes his steamer into a ticklish harbor of a thick, dark night, when everything is black ahead and roundabout, steering only by the echo of the ship's whistle! There is



SCHOONERS AT ANCHOR IN THE FOG

another, a confident seaman, a bluff, high-spirited fellow, who was once delayed by bitter winter weather—an inky night, with ice about, the snow flying, the seas heavy with frost, the wind blowing a gale.

“Where have you been?” they asked him, sarcastically, from the head office.

The captain had been on the bridge all night.

“Berry-picking,” was his laconic despatch in reply.

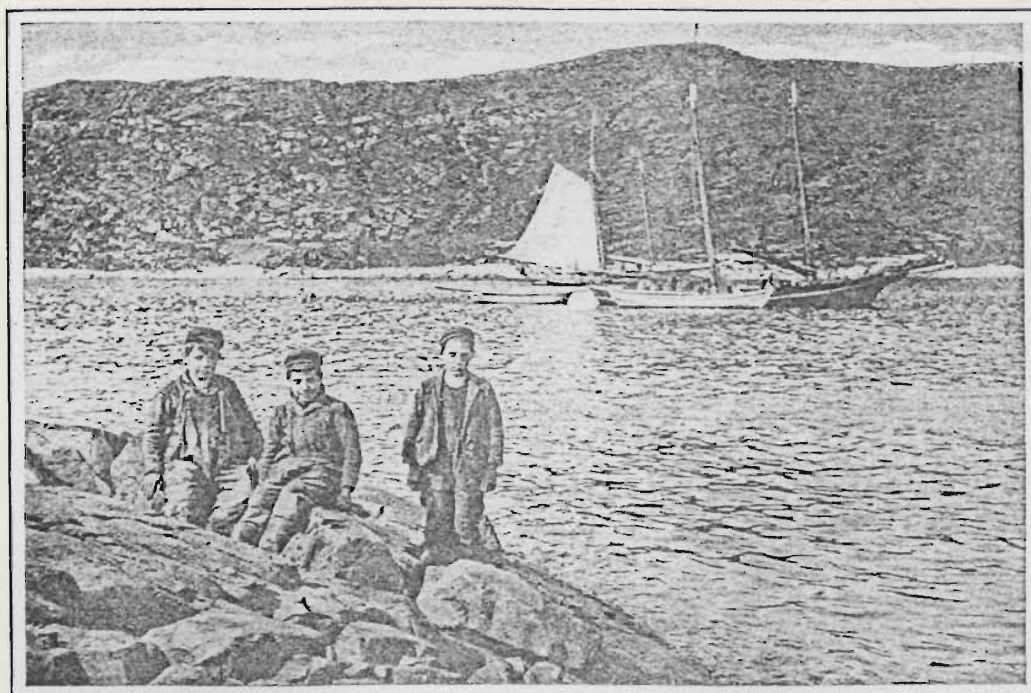
There is another—also the captain of a coastal steamer—who thought it wise to lie in harbor through a stormy night in the early winter.

“What detains you?” came a message from the head office.

“It is not a fit night for a vessel to be at sea,” the captain replied; and thereupon he turned in, believing the matter to be at an end.

The captain had been concerned for his vessel—not for his life; nor yet for





FISHER LADS ASHORE

his comfort. But the underling at the head office misinterpreted the message.

"What do we pay you for?" he telegraphed.

So the captain took the ship out to sea. Men say that she went out of commission the next day, and that it cost the company a thousand dollars to refit her.

It is to be remarked that a wreck on the Labrador coast excites no wide surprise. Never a season passes but some schooners are cast away. But that is merely the fortune of fishing: the folk are used to expecting catastrophe; when it comes, they accept it quietly. To the man from the south the marvel is not that some are lost, but that many safely return. Wrecked folk, of course, sorrow for the lost schooner; but they appear not to be moved at all by the happy issue which still leaves them their lives. They complain of fate for having robbed them of their schooner and their season's labor; it does not seem to occur to them that they might with propriety thank their lucky stars for having granted them the delight of once again

setting their feet on solid ground. They seem not to think of their lives; a fair generalization would be that they are quite without thought of fear in so far as life is concerned. It may be that habit, if I may so call it, has dulled their sense of peril. Not that they are wickedly callous, not that they are contemptuous; merely accustomed to the monotony of the thing.

Most men—I hesitate to say all—have been wrecked; every man, woman, and child who has sailed the Labrador has narrowly escaped, at least. The fashion of that escape is sometimes almost incredible. There are times, in these wild northern seas, when the man is but a pygmy before the forces into the thick of whose dread passion his calling by chance takes him. The schooner *All's Well* (which is a fictitious name) was helpless in the wind and sea and whirling snow of a great blizzard. At dusk she was driven inshore—no man knew where. Strange cliffs loomed in the snow ahead; breakers—they were within stone's throw—flashed and thundered to port and starboard; the ship was driving swiftly into the surf. When she was fairly upon the

rocks, Skipper John, then a hand aboard (it was he who told me the story), ran below and tumbled into his bunk, believing it to be the better place to drown in. "Well, lads," said he to the men in the fore-castle, "we got t' go this time. 'Tis no use goin' on deck." But the ship drove through a tickle no wider than twice her beam and came suddenly into the quiet water of a harbor!

The *Army Lass*, bound north, was lost in the fog. They hove her to. All hands knew that she lay somewhere near the coast. The skipper needed a sight of the rocks—just a glimpse of some headland or island—to pick the course. It was important that he should have it. There was an iceberg floating near; it was massive; it appeared to be steady—and the sea was quiet. From the top of it, he thought (the fog was dense and seemed to be lying low), he might see far and near. His crew put him on the ice with the quarter-boat and then hung off a bit. He clambered up the side of the berg. Near the summit he had to cut his foothold with an axe. This was unfortunate; for he gave the great white mass one blow too many. It split under his feet. He fell headlong into the widening crevice. But he was apparently not a whit the worse for it when his boat's crew picked him up.

A schooner—let her be called the *Good Fortune*—running through dense fog, with a fair, high wind and all sail set, struck a "twin" iceberg bow on. She was wrecked in a flash: her jib-boom was rammed into her fore-castle; her bows were stove in; her topmast snapped and came crashing to the deck. Then she fell away from the ice; whereupon the wind caught her, turned her about, and drove her, stern foremost, into a narrow passage which lay between the two towering sections of the "twin." She scraped along, striking the ice on either side; and with every blow, down came fragments from above. "It rained chunks," said the old skipper who told me the story. "You couldn't tell, look! what minute you'd get knocked on the head." The falling ice made great havoc with the deck-works; the boats were crushed; the "house" was stove in; the deck was littered with ice. But the *Good Fortune* drove safely through, was rigged with makeshift sails, made harbor, was re-

fitted by all hands—the Labradormen can build a ship with an axe—and continued her voyage.

"A dunderhead," say the folk, "can catch fish; but it takes a man t' find un." It is a chase; and, as the coast proverb has it, "the fish have no bells." It is estimated that there are 7000 square miles of fishing-banks off the Labrador coast. There will be fish somewhere—not everywhere; not every man will "use his salt" (the schooners go north loaded with salt for curing) or "get his load." In the beginning—this is when the ice first clears away—there is a race for berths. It takes clever, reckless sailing and alert action to secure the best. I am reminded of a skipper who by hard driving to windward and good luck came first of all to a favorable harbor. It was then night, and his crew was weary, so he put off running out his trap-leader until morning; but in the night the wind changed, and when he awoke at dawn there were two other schooners lying quietly at anchor near by and the berths had been "staked." When the traps are down, there follows a period of anxious waiting. Where are the fish? There are no telegraph-lines on that coast. The news must be spread by word of mouth. When, at last, it comes, there is a sudden change of plan—a wild rush to the more favored grounds.

It is in this scramble that many a skipper makes his great mistake. I was talking with a disconsolate young fellow in a northern harbor where the fish were running thick. The schooners were fast loading; but he had no berth, and was doing but poorly with the passing days.

"If I hadn't—if I *only* hadn't—took up me trap when I did," said he, "I'd been loaded an' off home. Sure, zur, would you believe it? but I had the berth off the point. Off the point—the berth off the point!" he repeated, earnestly, his eyes wide. "An', look! I hears they's a great run o' fish t' Outthroat Tickle. So I up with me trap, for I'd been gettin' nothin'; an'—an'—would you believe it? but the man that put his down where I took mine up took a hundred quintal\*"

\* A quintal is, roughly, a hundred pounds. One hundred quintals of green fish are equal, roughly, to thirty of dry, which, at \$3, would amount to \$90.

out o' that berth next mornin'! An' he'll load," he groaned, "afore the week's out!"

When the fish are running, the work is mercilessly hard; it is kept up night and day; there is no sleep for man or child, save, it may be, an hour's slumber where they toil, just before dawn. The schooner lies at anchor in the harbor, safe enough from wind and sea; the rocks, surrounding the basin in which she lies, keep the harbor water placid forever. But the men set the traps in the open sea, somewhere off the heads, or near one of the outlying islands; it may be miles from the anchorage of the schooner. They put out at dawn—before dawn, rather; for they aim to be at the trap just when the light is strong enough for the hauling. When the skiff is loaded, they put back to harbor in haste, throw the fish on deck, split them, salt them, lay them neatly in the hold, and put out to the trap again. I have seen the harbors—then crowded with fishing-craft—fairly ablaze with light at midnight. Torches were flaring on the decks and in the turf huts on the rocks ashore. The night was quiet; there was not a sound from the tired workers; but the flaring lights made known that the wild, bleak, far-away place—a basin in the midst of barren, uninhabited hills—was still astir with the day's work.

At such times, the toil at the oars, and at the splitting-table,\* whether on deck or in the stages—and the lack of sleep, and the icy winds and cold salt spray—is all bitter cruel to suffer. The Labrador fisherman will not readily admit that he lives a hard life; but if you suggest that when the fish are running it may be somewhat more toilsome than lives lived elsewhere, he will grant you something.

"Oh, ay," he'll drawl, "when the fish is runnin', 'tis a bit hard."

I learned from a child—he was merry, brave, fond of the adventure—that fishing is a pleasant business in the sunny mid-summer months; but that when, late in the fall, the skiff puts out to the trap at dawn, it is wise to plunge one's hands deep in the water before taking the oars, no matter how much it hurts, for one's wrists are then covered with salt-water

\* A "clever hand" can split—that is, clean—thirty fish in a minute.

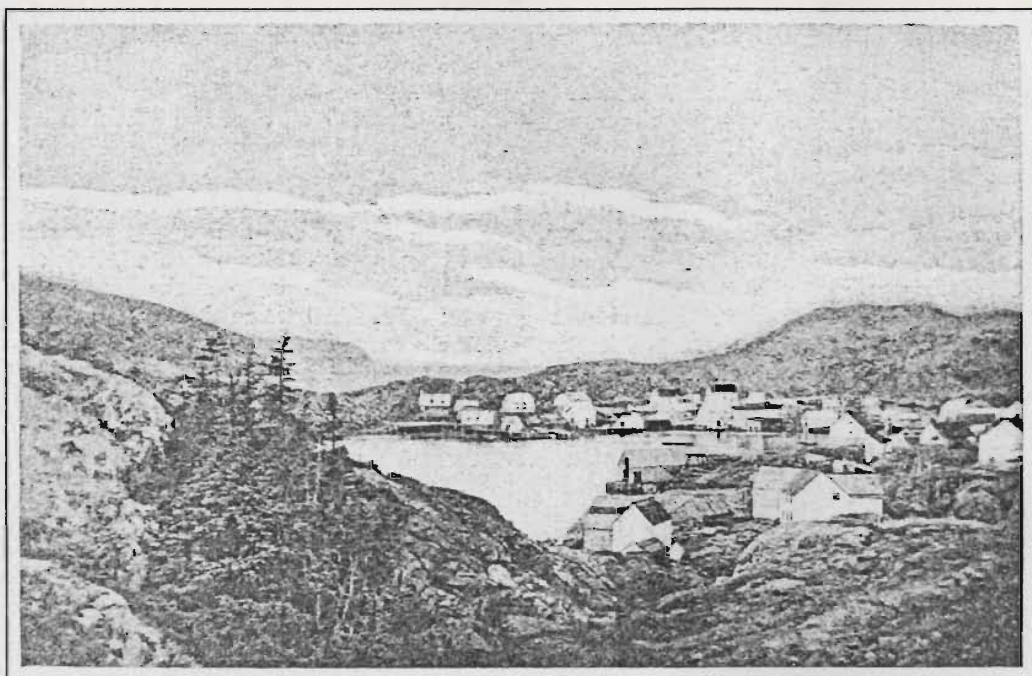
sores and one's palms are cracked, even though one take the precaution of wearing a brass chain—that, oh yes! it is wise to plunge one's hands in the cold water, as quick as may be; for thus one may "limber 'em up" before the trap is reached.

"'Tis not hard, now," said he. "But, oh—oo—oo! when the big nor'easters blow! Oo—oo!" he repeated, with a shrug and a sage shake of the head; "'tis won-der-ful hard those times!"

The return is small. The crews are comprised of from five to ten men, with, occasionally, a sturdy maid for cook, to whom is given \$30 for her season's work; some old hands will sail on no ship with a male cook, for, as one of them said, "Sure, some o' them min can't boil water without burnin' it!" A good season's catch is one hundred quintals of dry fish a man. A simple calculation—with some knowledge of certain factors which I need not state—makes it plain that a man must himself catch, as his share of the trap, 30,000 fish if he is to net a living wage. If his return is \$250 he is in the happiest fortune—richly rewarded, beyond his dreams, for his summer's work. One-half of that is sufficient to give any modest man a warm glow of content and pride. Often—it depends largely upon chance and the skill of his skipper—the catch is so poor that he must make the best of \$25 or \$30. It must not be supposed that the return is always in cash; it is usually in trade, which is quite a different thing—in Newfoundland.

The schooners take many passengers north in the spring. Such are called "freighters" on the coast; they are put ashore at such harbors as they elect, and, for passage for themselves, families, and gear, pay upon the return voyage twenty-five cents for every hundredweight of fish caught. As a matter of course, the vessels are preposterously overcrowded. Dr. Grenfell, of the Deep Sea Mission, tells of counting thirty-four men and sixteen women (no mention was made of children) aboard a nineteen-ton schooner, then on the long, rough voyage to the north. The men fish from the coast in small boats just as the more prosperous "green-fish catchers" put out from the schooners. Meantime, they live in mud





A HOME PORT IN NEWFOUNDLAND

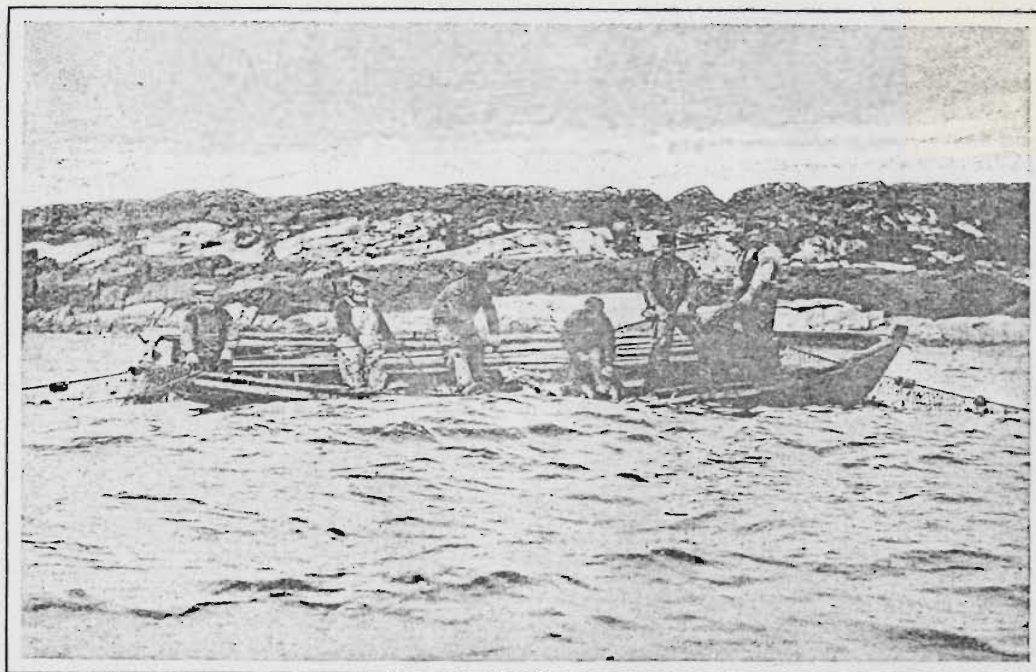
huts, which are inviting or otherwise, as the womenfolk go; some are damp, cave-like, ill-savored, crowded; others are airy, cozy, the floors spread deep with powdered shell, the whole immaculately kept. When the party is landed, the women sweep out the last of the winter's snow, the men build great fires on the floors; indeed, the huts are soon ready for occupancy. At best, they are tiny places—much like children's play-houses. There was once a tall man who did not quite fit the sleeping-place assigned him; but with great good nature he cut a hole in the wall, built a miniature addition for his feet, and slept the summer through at comfortable full length. It is a great outing for the children; they romp on the rocks, toddle over the nearer hills, sleep in the sunshine; but if they are eight years old, as one said—or well grown at five or seven—they must do their little share of work.

Withal, the Labradormen are of a simple, God-fearing, clean-lived, hardy race of men. There was once a woman who made boast of her high connection in England, as women will the wide

world over; and when she was questioned concerning the position she boasted relative occupied, replied, "Oh, *he's* Superintendent o' Foreign Governments!" There was an austere old Christian who on a Sunday morning left his trap—his whole fortune—lie in the path of a destroying iceberg rather than desecrate the Lord's day by taking it out of the water. Both political parties in Newfoundland shamelessly deceive the credulous fisherfolk; there was a childlike old fellow who, when asked, "And what will you do if there is no fish?" confidently answered: "Oh, they's goin' t' be a new Gov'ment. *He'll* take care o' we!" There was a sturdy son of the coast who deserted his schooner at sea and swam ashore. But he had mistaken a barren island for the mainland, which was yet far off; and there he lived, without food, for twenty-seven days! When he was picked up, his condition was such as may not be described (the Labrador fly is a vicious insect); he was unconscious, but he survived to fish many another season.

The mail-boat picked up Skipper Thomas of Carbonear—then master of a





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loaded schooner—at a small harbor near the Straits. His crew carried him aboard; for he was desperately ill, and wanted to die at home, where his children were.

"He's wonderful bad," said one of the men. "He've consumption."

"I'm just wantin' t' die at home," he said, again and again. "Just that—just where my children be!"

All hearts were with him in that last struggle—but no man dared hope; for the old skipper had already beaten off death longer than death is wont to wait, and his strength was near spent.

"Were you sick when you sailed for the Labrador in the spring?" they asked him.

"Oh, ay," said he; "I were terrible bad then."

"Then why," they said—"why did you come at all?"

They say he looked up in mild surprise. "I had t' make me livin'," he answered, simply.

His coffin was knocked together on the forward deck next morning—with Carbonear a day's sail beyond.

The fleet goes home in the early fall.

The schooners are loaded—some so low with the catch that the water washes into the scuppers. "You could wash your hands on her deck," is the skipper's proudest boast. The feat of seamanship, I do not doubt, is not elsewhere equalled. It is an inspiring sight to see the doughty little craft beating into the wind on a gray day. The harvesting of a field of grain is good to look upon; but I think that there can be no more stirring sight in all the world, no sight more quickly to melt a man's heart, more deeply to move him to love men and bless God, than the sight of the Labrador fleet beating home loaded—toil done, dangers past; the home port at the end of a run with a fair wind. The home-coming, I fancy, is much like the return of the viking ships to the old Norwegian harbors must have been. The lucky skippers strut the village roads with swelling chests, heroes in the sight of all; the old men, long past their labor, listen to new tales and spin old yarns; the maids and the lads renew their interrupted love-makings. There is great rejoicing—feasting, merrymaking, hearty thanksgiving.

Thanks be to God, the fleet's home!

APPENDIX D  
Photographs

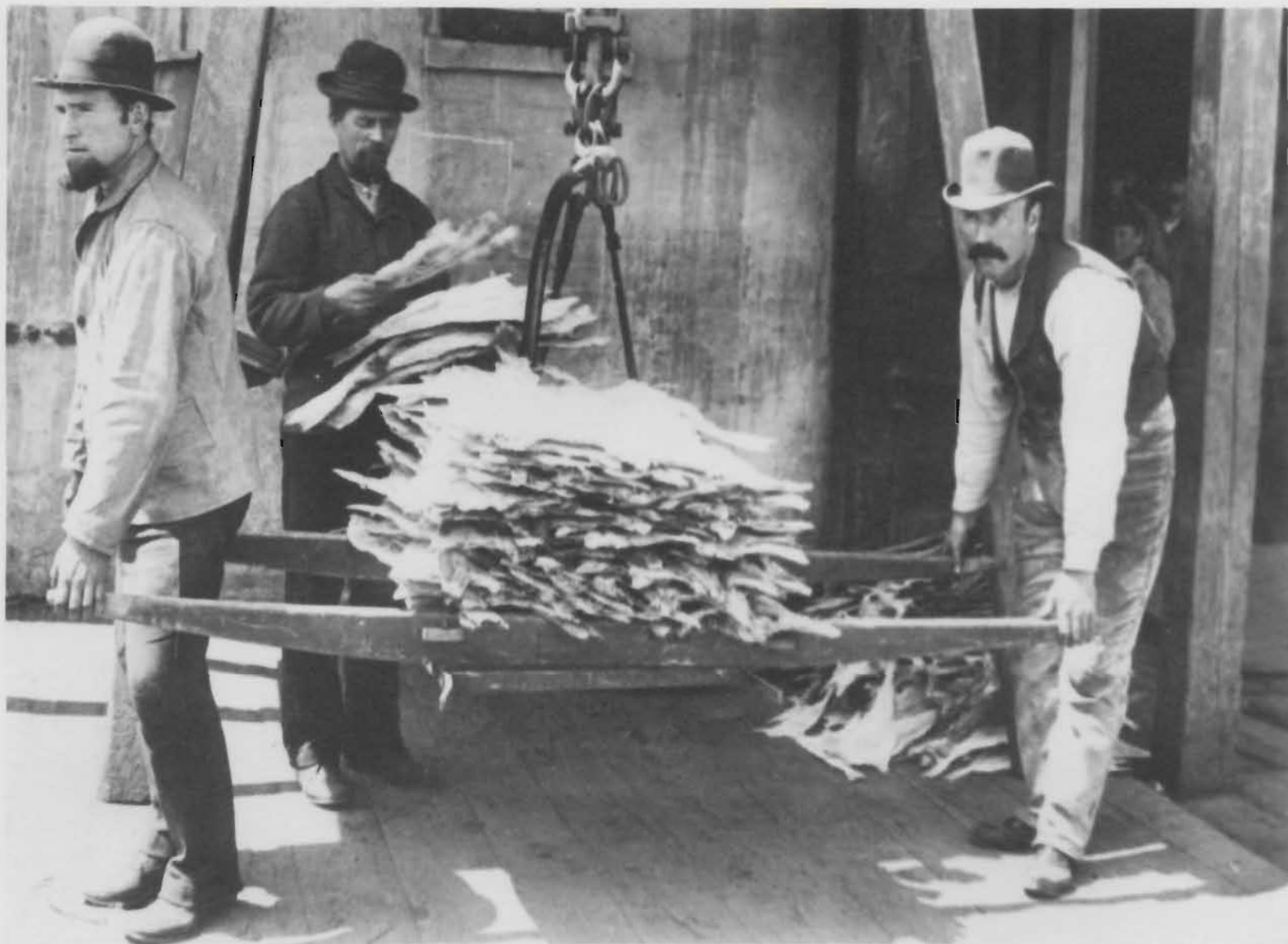


Photo 1. Grading and weighing dried cod fish. The man in the center is inspecting the fish for proper cure.



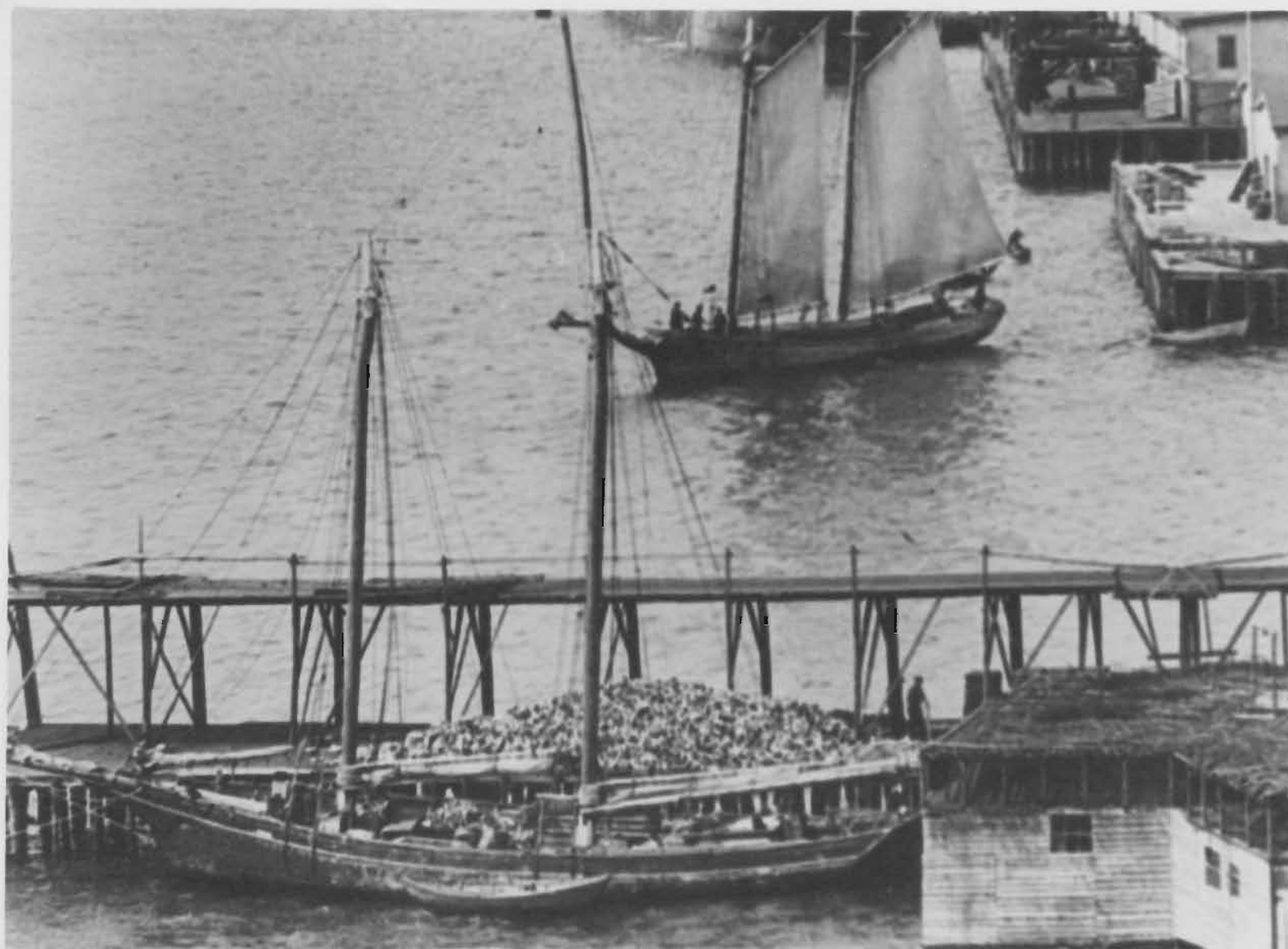


Photo 2. The floater in the foreground is taking on firewood before leaving for Labrador. It was often necessary to take firewood because firewood is scarce along much of the Labrador coast.



Photo 3. Vension Tickle, Labrador. Vension Tickle was occupied for many summers by fishermen and their families from Carbonear and Harbour Grace. Because of the good harbour, it was also a popular place for floater fishermen.

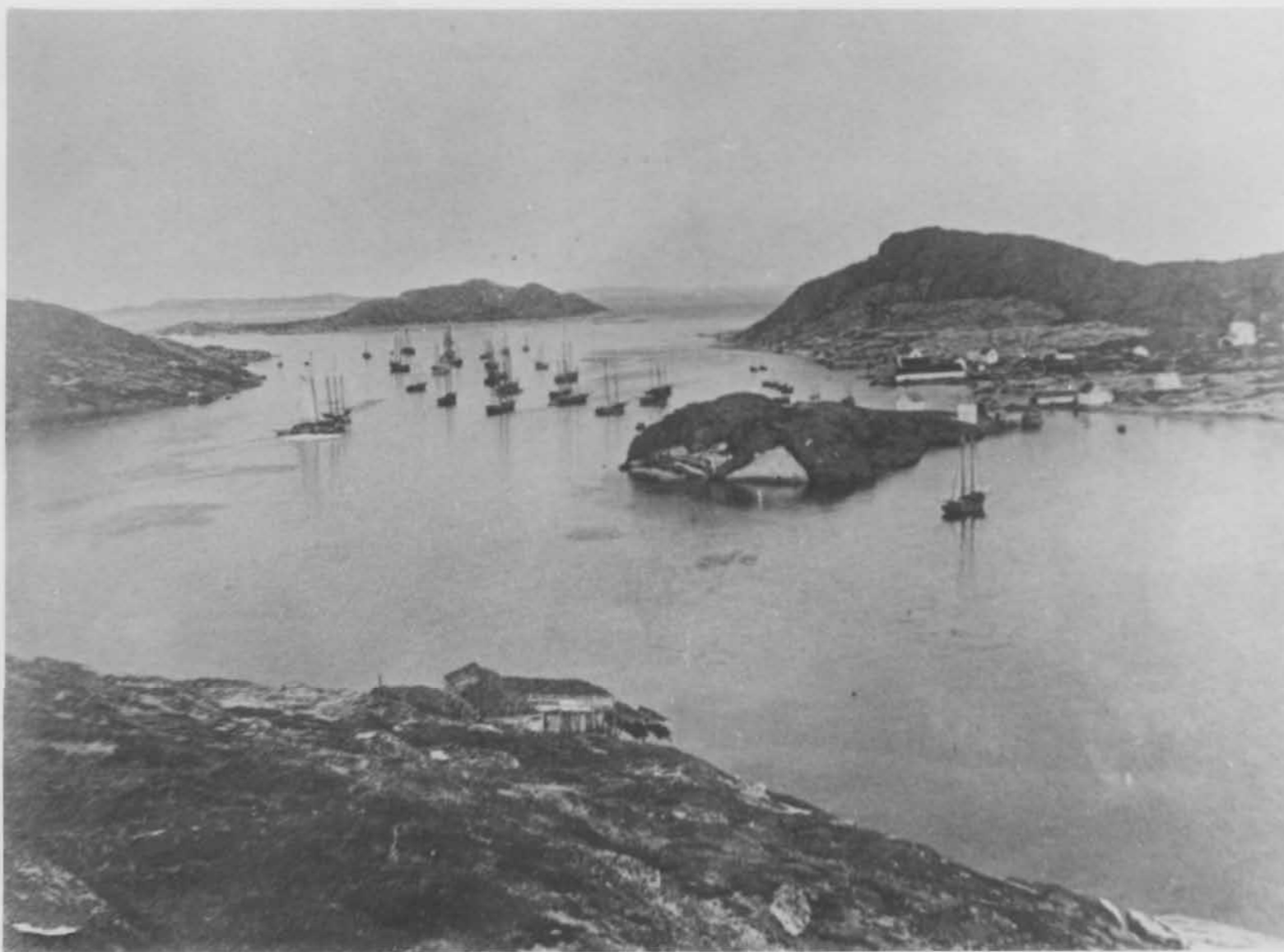


Photo 4. Indian Harbour, Labrador. In years gone by, Indian Harbour was one of the main centers of the floater fishery on the coast of Labrador.





Photo 5. Labrador cod fish spread out to dry on "flakes" in St. John's. This was a very common sight in Newfoundland not so many years ago.



Photo 6. Rowing ashore from floaters anchored in Batteau, Labrador. For many summers Batteau was visited by floaters from Newfoundland. The small boats in the foreground are called "punts".





